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[THE INTRODUCTION.]

## MY LADY'S LOVERS. A NEW NOVEL. BY AN EMINENT AUTHOR.

### CHAPTER I.

LORD RAIDENSTORE.

Let every nymph, though thy equal in rare beauty,  
Pay homage to thee; and let all men  
Become like Ferhad of the mountain—  
Distracted on beholding thy loveliness.

"It is only one of my usual attacks of gout," Duke Blackfern said, and there was no unwonted excitement at Denvilles when it was known that his grace would keep his room for a time.

His ordinary medical attendant saw no reason for alarm, and he assured Lady Pearl Faverton there was no occasion to send for the young Marquis of Sealbury, who was at Eton dabbling with learning and becoming proficient in the cricket field.

"You are sure there is nothing to fear?" asked Lady Pearl.

The doctor looked at the youthful, wistful face, wondrously beautiful, with the roses of seventeen summers upon it, already talked of among men and envied by women as something that every season does not see, and gave the usual qualified answer which medical men resort to when pushed for a direct opinion.

"As far as human mind can judge," he said, "there is nothing at present to give the least anxiety."

This was at noon, but ere night had come Denvilles rang with a different story. The doctor with weary face was with the duke, with all but Lady Pearl banished from the room, and a special train was rushing down from town, bringing with it one of the most celebrated practitioners of the day, who had been hurriedly telegraphed for.

He arrived at the station, where the carriage was waiting for him, almost simultaneously with a groom from Denvilles, who came galloping down to hurry the carriage on.

With a calm, professional face the great man took his seat, was whirled through the darkness of midnight at a dangerous pace, and arrived at the bedside—too late, the duke was dead!

"Angina pectoris seized him half an hour ago," said the local practitioner.

"Then nothing could have saved him," said the metropolitan man.

All the house grieved, for the duke had been a kind and generous master, but to Lady Pearl it was a terrible blow. Motherless for ten years she had looked up to and loved the grand old man now still in death with a double affection. It was so sudden too! A few short hours ago he had been alive and joyous, stroking her hair with a father's fondness, and now he would never speak to her more on earth. It was bitter and terrible to her, so young and so imperfectly acquainted with sorrow.

Early in the morning her brother, a duke at sixteen years of age, arrived and wept with her. The boy cared little for the titles, honours and wealth his father's death brought to him. He had yet to learn how much men value them and what deeds they will do, what friends forget,

what loves ignore in this race for riches and power.

"We are alone, Melville, now," sobbed Lady Pearl.

"Don't cry," replied the boy, brushing away his own tears. "I will take care of you, Pearl."

He was her junior by a year, but he was tall and strong for his age. Healthy, manly and brave and fragile Pearl clung to him in love and trust, scarce dreaming how much she would need him in after years.

The duke was buried with the pomp that became his race, and the two children passed to the care of Lord Ardinlaun, a Scotch peer of strict living, who shut up Denvilles, carried Lady Pearl to Scotland and gave the young duke a very stinted allowance during his minority.

"With young men," said the careful Scotchman, "money is a thing made to throw away upon knaves and harpies. Manhood teaches them the use of it."

So Lady Pearl was lost to society, and many lovers mourned until they had a new beauty to rave about and lose their hearts to, and the new one coming soon the fragile flower was almost forgotten within a year.

Lord and Lady Ardinlaun lived far away up in the north, where the air was strong and pure, and temptations to turn the night into day few and far between. Balls were as scarce as they are in the wilds of India, and dinner parties, when given at all, arranged for an early hour; but to ride, to walk, to be up with the sun and to go to rest when London really begins to awaken were things commonly practised, and bright eyes and strong, supple limbs were the result.

Lady Pearl mourned for awhile. But health was hers, and daily she grew in beauty and in grace for three years, so that even the cold eyes of her guardian lord marked her wonderful grace, and Lady Ardinlaun, Scotch to the backbone, with the strength and constitution if not the actual physique of the gillie, began to think if they were right in keeping such a woman away from the world.

"We ought to take her to town," she said, "for her time to marry is near at hand."

"There's many a bold laird here would be glad of her," his lordship replied.

"The eagle and the dove," her ladyship rejoined, "do not mate, be the dove ever so strong upon the wing. We must give up a year of sweet air and swallow smoke for her sake. She's grieving for her brother too. He only writes and writes, but never comes."

"If she wishes it so shall it be," he said.

Lady Pearl was consulted, and she did wish it, for although the bracing north had become pleasing to her heart was in the south. Her brother in his letters had often expressed a desire for her to come and been regretful of his inability to go to her.

"At Eton I spent all my money," he wrote once, "and now that I am at Oxford I find my stinging allowance not half enough. But I don't care to ask Lord Ardinlaun for money, and can wait my time. I shall be twenty-one soon, then I can do as I will with my own."

Lady Pearl was just twenty years of age and her brother nineteen when the Scotch lord and his lady took a house for a season in town. The expense to them was enormous, and they made many grimaces over it, consoling themselves as best they could with the thought that it was only once in their lives.

"Lovers will come like bees to the heather in bloom," said Lady Ardinlaun, "and it is not the first that comes which shall alight on the flower."

Pearl was now a glorious woman, tall, with well-rounded figure, a face bright with intelligence, health, and beauty, and a bosom filled with fires that only needed the touch of the magician Cupid to leap forth.

The men she had seen in Scotland were mighty men and strong, but they lacked the gentleness, the polish it might be, that a woman with Pearl's nature instinctively looked for in a lover, and they had sighed and spoken in their blunt fashion in vain.

"I do not think I shall ever marry," she thought, as she travelled south. "When Melville comes of age I shall live with him until he marries, and after that—"

Well, after that she could not learn until the time came. Meanwhile she was speeding back to the beloved south and to her yet more beloved brother.

He met her at the station, so grown that he was a giant among men, with a bronzed face and the fearless look that has ever carried terror to the heart of England's enemies in the battle field. With scarce an effort he lifted her out of the carriage and kissed her fondly.

"Why, Pearl, I did not think you could be improved, and yet you are a thousand times handsomer than when we parted."

"It's the good Scotch air," said Lady Ardinlaun, as she gave him her hand.

"What would Melville have been with it?" asked Pearl, merrily.

"He might have held his own with some of our best men," remarked my lord.

"I would make an effort to do so now," said the young duke, drily. "But how remiss I am. I have a friend with me. Lady Ardinlaun, permit me, in an unconventional way, to introduce you to my friend Lord Raidenstore."

He went through the ceremony with them all as a brother giant advanced and made his bow. The young duke was dark and full of life and energy, Lord Raidenstore fair, with a sluggish way of moving, as if it were a little too much trouble for him to carry his big body about with him, otherwise they were well matched, and indeed were two famous rivals in the athletic field.

"Raidenstore was near the station by accident," the young duke explained, "and as I want you, Pearl, to know him, I seized a very early opportunity to bring you together."

And already the bringing together had borne fruit, for the fair-haired lord had seen and looked upon one whose coming turned the tide of his life and filled his heart with a longing it had never known before.

## CHAPTER II.

HUGH EGERTON.

And like the sunset's crimson light  
To fading scenes of nature given,  
Love makes our meditations bright  
With hopes inspired by Heaven.

LORD RAIDENSTORE parted with his new friends outside the station, where his groom was leading his horse up and down. Master and man were splendidly mounted, and as the former sprang into the saddle, in a graceful and easy fashion, speaking of perfect strength and suppleness, Grace was reminded of the Centaurs she had read of in mythological books. He raised his hat, rode in advance of the carriage in which the rest of the party was seated, and at the corner disappeared.

"He rides well," said Pearl.

"No better or more fearless horseman in England," her brother replied.

"It is a pity he is not a Scotchman," said Lady Ardinlaun.

"Scotland has no need of such," said her husband, "but England is graced by such a man."

The young duke looked at his sister and smiled. He did not wish to war with the vanity of his guardian, but he knew, what is patent to all people with eyes in their heads, that the more southern country had some bone and muscle in it still.

"By the way," he said, "I hope your lordship has no engagement for to-morrow."

"None that I know of," was the reply. "But you must ask Lady Ardinlaun."

Her ladyship had made none, knowing, or, what was more to the point, caring for so few people in town, but she hoped he was going to suggest something better than a flower-show.

"Our athletic sports begin to-morrow," said the duke, "the struggle between the universities, although the cricket match draws the greatest crowd. Oxford is well up this year."

"I approve of all athletic sports," said Lady Ardinlaun, "and we will go."

"You need not trouble yourselves about a carriage," said the duke, "as I shall bring mine."

"Yours?" said Lord Ardinlaun, turning a pair of keen eyes upon him.

"I have started a poor affair, my lord. It is necessary for one in my position not to be behind my fellows."

"Humph!"

The old lord looked dissatisfied, but as he was always in that state when in town Lady Ardinlaun whispered to Pearl not to heed him, and the arrangements for the morrow were made complete.

The house taken was in the neighbourhood of Berkeley Square, dingy enough outside but comfortable within, and as cool as any house in town can be in June.

Pearl liked it, any house there would have been welcome with the moderate comforts of modern civilisation after the quietude of the lone mansion in Scotland, with its great heather prairie stretched out before it.

Before noon on the morrow Lord Ardinlaun, standing by one of the windows looking into the street with a sour face, and wondering how men could endure being crowded together and yet wear a smiling look like many he gazed upon, a handsomely-appointed four-in-hand with two grooms and everything fitting drew up at the door. The young duke was on the box, and Lord Raidenstore sat by his side.

"Is that his modest carriage?" the old laird muttered. "Denville has already had a shak-

ing. I thought the moderate allowance I made him would have saved him, but where there's a will there's a way."

Still there was the hope that it might be the property of Lord Raidenstore, who was three years Melville's senior, but this hope was speedily dispelled when the arms painted on the panels came under the Scotch lord's inspection. He made a grimace but said nothing, feeling that it would be a waste of words just then, and he had as great a dislike for wasting speech as he had for squandering money.

Lord Raidenstore vacated the box seat for Pearl and sat just behind with Lady Ardinlaun. The old laird, in a very cantankerous mood, preferred sitting in the rear in front of the grooms, and all the way to the grounds where the sports were to be held he sat with folded arms and hat drawn down—the image of deep and unpleasant thought.

Her ladyship was in a better mood. As a matter of economy she avoided display, but when she could share in any real enjoyment without any sacrifice of her purse she entered readily into it—and Lord Raidenstore was so very agreeable.

But while he talked to her he scarcely removed his eyes from Pearl, who was chatting and laughing with her brother all the way, Melville handling the ribbons with a skill that opened the eyes of Lord Ardinlaun, yet a little wider—that drag and four was not a thing of to-day or yesterday.

"I wonder how deep he is," the old laird thought, and occupied his mind with calculations that were not of a very agreeable nature, and so he will leave him to them.

On reaching the grounds they found the company had for the most part assembled, but their place was reserved for them, and Melville brought up his drag with a neatness and dash that evoked exclamations of admiration from the lips of several lookers-on standing by the ropes.

"Here Raidenstore and I must leave you for a time," he said. "I am in for throwing the hammer and cricket ball, and he goes in for the high jump and quarter of a mile race."

"Will he run or jump?" asked Pearl.

"Wait and see," said Melville, with a smile.

The groom by this time had taken out the horses and led them away. The drag was therefore safe in the hands of Lord Ardinlaun, who, as soon as the young men left, joined the ladies in front, gave up his calculations, and made himself agreeable.

Already some of the athletes were moving about the circle in front, in undress, and the keen instincts of the laird, leaning towards the admiration of bodily vigour, were aroused. Lord Raidenstore came back for a moment to give them programmes, and then left them to good until his share in the day's sport was over.

"Quarter of a mile race!" cried Lord Ardinlaun, conning his programme with the aid of his double eye-glass. "I see Raidenstore is in it. What a farce for a man of that breadth and weight to go in for running!"

"You ran once, I think?" Pearl suggested.

"All Scotchmen can run—if they try," was the reply, "but Raidenstore is an Englishman."

The sports began with the hundred yards race, for which there were five competitors—all nimble, dashing-looking young fellows, one especially being marked and commented upon by the spectators. There was a great deal of talking going on below the drag about one Hugh Egerton, and Pearl soon made out that it was to this particular competitor that the name belonged.

The winning-post was just below the drag, and the five competitors stood facing it a hundred yards up, with this Hugh Egerton on the right, standing easily, and without the eager look that so marked the rest, for the word to start.

He was tall, but still several inches below Lord Raidenstore or the young duke, and scarcely looked his inches, owing to the perfect proportion of his body. That he had auburn hair and deep blue eyes Pearl could see, and his features appeared to be good. His carriage, so easy, was in her eyes perfect.



Coming from a country where for ten years she had met with only mighty but somewhat ungainly men, the nimble, graceful athletes were agreeable, and he being apparently the most graceful of all, was of especial interest to her.

"I'll lay ten to one on Egerton," said one of the loungers below.

"It is a hundred to one," said another.

These observations only increased her interest, and with expectant eyes and silent tongue she awaited the issue of the race.

"Are you ready? Go!"

Like arrows from a bow the five competitors shot forward, ran closely side by side to within twenty yards of the finish, when he who was called Hugh Egerton came suddenly to the front without making an apparent effort, and won by five yards amid enthusiastic applause from the light blues.

"That man can run," said Lord Ardinlaun; "but a hundred yards is not much, and I wonder how he would stand a day's walk across the heather."

"Well, I should say," said Pearl.

"You think he ran well?"

"Better than any man I have ever seen."

"Better than Donnie Lourie?"

Pearl laughed, and declined to give a direct answer.

"Donnie Lourie is your Scottish hero," she said, "and before giving an opinion I should like to see him run *HERE*."

After the first race the hammer was thrown, and here the young lord of Denvilles won his guardian's heart and wiped out for the time all memory of his sinful extravagance by winning easily—a shout from Oxford.

Next came the first heat of the quarter of a mile race, and Lord Raidenstore with three others toed the mark. A gallant struggle took place between the two Oxonians, their rivals being beaten a good twenty yards. Lord Raidenstore literally won on the tape, there being scarce a foot between them.

The second heat followed, and here again Hugh Egerton appeared. Once more his name was murmured about, and those who heard offered to lay odds upon him, but the takers were few.

Pearl felt a growing interest in this stranger, which she was inclined to be angry with herself for entertaining, but when the race began she kept her eyes on him from first to last.

Again he won by a few yards, and as before making no apparent effort.

"It rests between him and Lord Raidenstore," said Lady Ardinlaun, "and it is possible that he may prove to be the better man."

"I hope so," said Pearl, unconsciously.

"You hope so, my dear child?"

"I BELIEVE so," said Pearl, correcting herself with a slight blush. "He seems to me to be able to run any pace he pleases."

"For a short distance," said Lord Ardinlaun, who could not give any man but a Scotchman unqualified praise.

As with the hammer, so with the cricket ball. Pearl had the joy of beholding her brother victor, and his share of the day's work being over, he renewed his ordinary attire and rejoined them on the drag.

"Raidenstore has won his heat," he said, "but they are laying odds against him for the final. Egerton will give him work to do if he intends winning."

"Do you know him?" asked Pearl, with assumed indifference.

"Yes, I have met him, and a good fellow he seems to be—but an oddity."

"An oddity, Melville? In what way?"

"He is silent and reserved in all things. Looks to me like a man who has known great trouble or HAS trouble. Seems to have little interest in anything, although a great many have interest in him."

"So many friends, Melville?"

"No, my dearest Pearl; I was alluding to the gentler sex, who are all in secret raving about him, and he will have none of them. There never was a pair of eyes known to our world that could draw the sadness out of his."

Pearl listened a little greedily to these details, and Hugh Egerton rose in her estimation. A

sad, handsome man, with a mystery, for of course he had a mystery or he would not be sad and silent, could not fail to be interesting.

"Is he rich?" she asked, after a pause.

"Rich—who?" asked her brother, who had forgotten whom they had been talking about.

"Mr. Egerton—who runs so well."

"Not he—as poor as Job. At Cambridge, they tell me, he never gives a party, and will not go to one. The first he cannot afford, and the second he is too proud to accept."

"Who is he?"

"Little is known of him, Pearl, except that his name is Egerton, but I think he is a very good fellow."

It was on her lips to thank him for speaking so well of the young fellow, but fortunately the indiscretion was stopped by a clapping of hands. Egerton and Lord Raidenstore were walking side by side to the starting-post.

The huge proportions of the latter, towering full four inches above his rival, while dwarfing him a little did not make a pigmy of him, nor make him look otherwise than what he was—a handsome, graceful man. Both walked with a light, springy step, but Hugh Egerton's "action" found most favour. Odds were being betted on him to Melville's scarcely-concealed mortification.

"It isn't a matter of the men," he explained to Pearl, "but the Varsity. All's ready. Here they come."

A race neck and neck, every nerve strained, with one at least, a race as deadly and earnest as if it were a race for life. Shouts of encouragement from their partisans rent the air, but about as they may they cannot give Lord Raidenstore a suppleteness of limb that is not his, and ere he has covered half the ground he is beaten, and Hugh Egerton comes home an easy winner by a dozen yards.

"What a splendid victory," softly breathes Pearl.

"Melville," said Lord Ardinlaun, rising up, "you say you know Egerton?"

"Yes."

"Bring him home by and bye, will you? I should like to know him. I think he must have been borne over side of the border."

"And perhaps has a slight dash of the Donnie Lourie blood in his veins," said Pearl, with a smile.

"A good thing for him if he has, puss," said the old laird.

Lord Raidenstore won the high jump, but Pearl was not looking when he topped the fatal final inch which disposed of all rivals, for Hugh Egerton had dressed and the young duke had found him and brought him to the drag for introduction.

His clothes were of good material and cut and fitted well, but they were not so new as the attire of the other men around him. Pearl saw how well they had been brushed and put on with the care that never leaves the thorough gentleman though he comes down to beggarly apparel.

His face was good, and his voice melodious with the minor tone of sorrow running under it. He made light of his victory and was sure Lord Raidenstore must have been out of training.

"I indulge in athletic sports," he said, "because they are healthy and invigorating and cost little."

"You are not extravagant," said Lord Ardinlaun, approvingly.

"No, my lord," he said, "they give me no opportunity in college for—"

He paused and a heightening of colour told that he had suddenly touched upon a painful subject. He had spoken without thinking, for his mind was wondering a little. He was looking at Lady Pearl, who was sitting thoughtfully with her eyes bent down.

A thing of beauty and a joy for ever,

a rose among women, a peri the like of which he had never seen before.

But how was it she scarcely spoke to him after being introduced, and let him go away with a pang of dissatisfaction in his breast that marred the double victory of the day?

## CHAPTER III.

SIR CHARLES FRIARLY.

A soul—captivated by her charms  
To waste itself in chains and head beneath  
The weight of bondage.

THE arrival of Lord and Lady Ardinlaun with their beautiful ward being known callers poured the next day into their old friends and were driven up in cab and carriage, or lounged in from the club, so that all the afternoon the principle reception-room was thronged.

Lord Ardinlaun looked upon the inundation as a tribute to Scotland and welcomed it without a shadow of his usual austerity upon him. Lady Ardinlaun knew better and put the wreath on the right brow, hailing it as a good omen for her future.

"She will marry soon," she thought, as she cast a glance at Pearl with a half-dozen young and handsome cavaliers bowing themselves before her, more or less figuratively, of course, and showing in the modern polite way their bitter scorn for each other.

The days are gone when rival lovers exchange glances of hatred, hot words, and draw swords in the presence of beauty, but where rivalry is it will show its head and let the glance of its eye be seen, though it be through the peephole of the mask of courtesy.

The men were agreeable enough and Lady Pearl spent the time pleasantly. She expected Hugh Egerton would come and looked for him, but the afternoon waned away without his appearance, and it was half past five, when the room was thinning, that she heard his name announced and saw him bowing to Lady Ardinlaun.

In a room he showed even to a better advantage than in the field. The gloom of the room, with the shadow of the big houses on the other side of the street, harmonised better than sunshine with that peculiar sadness of his face, which he relieved once, and only once, with a soft smile, during his stay.

It crossed his face as he came over to Pearl's side, and for a moment it looked as if he were overjoyed to see her, but the next instant he was quiet—Hugh Egerton paying an ordinary visit and nothing more.

They talked of commonplace things, among them the recent sports and cricket match pending on the morrow. Pearl had never seen a great cricket match, knew nothing of the points of the game, but she was going, and hoped to be interested.

"The company will amuse you," he said, "if nothing else does."

"Do you play?" she asked.

"No," he replied. "I have to study and cannot give up all my time. Nor do I think I should care to play at Lord's on these occasions."

"Why not?" she asked.

"Cricket and picnics are both pleasant," he replied, "but they should be enjoyed apart."

"What an odd idea," she said.

"I believe I am peculiar in some things," he replied.

"Perhaps you will be a spectator if not a player?" she said.

"I did not intend to do so, but your brother was courteous in offering me a seat in his drag—"

"And you accepted?"

"Yes. I could not be so churlish as I generally am to one so courteous."

He rose to go, and looked into her eyes with the straight fearlessness of honesty as their hands met. She returned his gaze with the slightest possible shrinking, and another was in his place.

An old admirer was before her this time, one Sir Charles Friarly, who had been introduced to her when she first came out just before the old duke died.

He was a tall, swarthy man, with dark, bead-like eyes, set a shade too close together for the perfection of beauty, an aquiline nose, thin, clear-cut lips, and an oval face, set off by whiskers and moustache à la militaire.

Women generally spoke of him as a handsome man, but he was not a favourite. The more timid of them admired him as they would have admired a tiger, and gave him as wide a berth as possible.

Three years before he had been an ardent admirer of Pearl, and meditated wooing her in sober earnest, but ere his chance came the duke died and Pearl was taken away to Scotland.

Among the few who remembered the young beauty he had thought most of her, but he was a man of the world, and during her absence he married, choosing a proud, handsome daughter of the house of Burlandone, famous for its passion and its pride.

It was not a marriage of love on his side, but simply of admiration. His wife, however, was at first devotedly attached to him, and would have remained so if admiration had been strong enough to hold him to her.

But it was not. Little by little the tie loosened, and he drifted down to the matter-of-fact husband, giving her ice for fire until she too was growing cold.

Thus matters stood when he came into the presence of her he had loved in her budding womanhood, to find her beauty increased tenfold, and to learn that old impulses lightly touched will spring into renewed activity with double strength.

Pearl had forgotten him, and naively confessing it stung him to the quick. He was a proud man, who was accustomed to ride over obstacles that barred his way, and made a vow within himself that he would soon impress himself so upon her memory that she should remember him while she lived.

But he was all urbanity, and introduced Lady Friarly, a dark woman, with black, sleepy eyes that somehow reminded one of the thunder-cloud in the horizon. She was very quiet with Pearl, but scarcely exchanged a dozen words with her.

"You must excuse us," she said, "we have another call to make, and have a dinner to-night."

Husband and wife went downstairs without exchanging a word and took their seats in a carriage waiting. The active footman put up the steps, closed the door, and touched his hat.

"Where to, Sir Charles?"

"To Mrs. Tollington's," replied the baronet.

"No—home," said Lady Friarly, sharply.

He turned upon her an inquiring face, and she answered the look.

"I am not well," she said; "the heat has oppressed me."

"Home then, Walters," said the baronet; and the footman, springing upon the box, announced to the coachman that there was another storm brewing below.

"I trust it is entirely owing to the heat that you are going home," Sir Charles said, as the carriage moved away.

"You know it is not," she replied. "What is heat or cold to me, or any weather?"

"That being the case, Lady Friarly, may I inquire into the cause of our calling being cut short?"

"Is not the inquiry superfluous?"

"I think not."

"What a hypocrite you are!" she hissed rather than said. "Do you think I am blind? How could I help seeing that you have not forgotten the woman you loved before?"

"Jealous again," he said, calmly, looking out of the window. "I would rather have a millstone about my neck than a jealous woman!"

"Am I a millstone?" she asked, fiercely.

"Sometimes I think you are," he replied. "At another time I fancy I am married to a lady of sweet temper, bordering on the seraphic."

"What my temper is you make it. If you had never changed—"

"The old story, Mildred. Let us be done with it. You are too absurd. What has Lady Pearl to do with me? She had even forgotten we had ever met."

"You are going to the cricket match to-morrow, I think?" said Lady Friarly.

"I have arranged to do so," Sir Charles replied.

"How are you going?"

"Upon a drag."

"Whose drag?"

"On my word, Lady Friarly, you are excelling yourself to-day. Am I in the witness-box?"

"You are. Answer me, I say. But why should I wait for an answer when I can guess? You are going on the drag of Duke Blackfern—that woman's brother. She, of course, is going too. And you hope to spend an agreeable day in her society. No, I swear that you shall not."

"I have made the engagement and I shall keep it," was the cool reply.

"If you do," was the equally cool rejoinder, "I will come to the ground and drag you off. You know me and you can tell if I am likely to break my word."

"As I live, Mildred," said Sir Charles, "you make me wonder at times if you are not bereft of your senses."

"You may wonder what you please, but you are not going to Lord's Ground to-morrow."

"Very well," he said, quietly; and sitting back so that his face was in shadow, said not another word all the way home.

Arriving there he handed Lady Friarly out with the utmost politeness and followed her upstairs with an unchanged face. It was not until he was shut in his own room that the real man came to the surface.

Then the hot passions within him came boiling and bubbling up, and he sat with brows bent down on his flashing eyes and hot words pouring out like lava from his lips.

"Bound hand and foot," he muttered, "chained to a curse. I have borne, as the anger of men goes, well until this day, but having seen her I feel that I can bear no more. What is to be done? If I were free—free! no hope of that. But if I were I might woo and win the Lady Pearl. Who knows? Strange things come to pass in this world, unexpected prizes turn up to those who are shaking hands with poverty. If I were free—free! Well! I will think of it, and when I do think, Lady Friarly, it is to a purpose, you mad woman. Ah! what if she were really mad? I'll think and hope."

(To be Continued.)

## SCIENCE.

**HALL'S LIFE RAFT.**—Mr. Thomas Hall, of Newton, Mass., has just received a patent for a life-raft which is both novel and practicable. It consists of a double float or raft made of cork or other light material in such form as to fit the outside of any ordinary ship's boat. The raft is made in two parts, secured to opposite sides of the boat by suitable lashings. On shipboard the raft may be carried on deck or suspended from davits. When launched it is impossible to either swamp or sink it. Life-lines are provided on all sides, so that it will not only float those actually in the boat, but as many as can hang on by the lines. A raft of this kind, if generally adopted, would save many lives, as in times of intense excitement the ordinary boats are very liable to be overcrowded and swamped in launching; they are also in great danger of being overturned by people in the water in their attempts to save themselves.

**CELTIC REMAINS IN AUSTRIA.**—An interesting discovery has just been made at Halle, near Salzburg. A tumulus has there been opened, containing a large quantity of human bones and other relics, including bronze rings of various sizes and workmanship, knives, corals, amber, and numerous other trinkets. The most important object among the remains is a skull of massive build and unusual shape, and with the teeth in an excellent state of preservation. The mound where the discovery was made is believed to have been the burial-place of members of an ancient Celtic race.

**ALLIGATOR LEATHER.**—The rapid increase in the demand for alligator leather in Europe makes it possible that alligator farming may become an important industry in the Southern swamps of America. The foreign demand already amounts to many thousand hides a year. The tanning of alligator hides began about twenty years ago. At first Louisiana furnished the skins, and New Orleans was the centre of the traffic. The general slaughter of alligators soon made them scarce in that State, and now Florida is the chief source of supply. The tanning is done in the North.

**A NEW TORPEDO.**—A new torpedo has been invented by Mr. Whitehead, whose fish torpedo is so generally used both in our own and foreign navies; and a number of officers of experience are to be sent to Fiume to witness experiments with the improved weapon. In addition to officers already on the Mediterranean station, some of those attached to the Torpedo School at Portsmouth have been directed to attend these trials, the result of which will be of great importance to the navy.

**THE DEADLY LINDEN.**—A St. Louis physician says the linden tree is dangerous to health, being like the deadly upas tree of the East. The St. Louis doctor has been making investigations, and he says: "Just in the spring, when the sap was about to rise, I wounded my trees in several places, and collected the exuding gum carefully. I found in it a new and singular alkaloid, to which we gave the name of 'lindoline,' and which fully justified my fears. It is a most deadly poison—somewhat akin to the curare or woorell poison of South America. A very small inoculation upon the skin of a cat, made with a needle simply dipped in the lindoline, killed the animal in eighteen seconds. It acts as a nerve excitant of great power, and has a real value in the materia medica as an antidote to morphine poisoning and other cases of that kind; but it must be greatly diluted in order to do anything of this kind, as it is intensely virulent. I am quite sure that a pin-scratch touched with lindoline would kill a man in a couple of minutes. Of course, like all poisons of this kind, it is not one-tenth as effective in the stomach as when inoculated, still even there it is deadly."

**A NOVEL MOUNTAIN RAILWAY.**—A curious project is on foot in connection with the well-known baths of La Raillière, in France. The hot sulphur springs which constitute the attraction of the neighbourhood are high up on the mountain, and at a considerable distance from Cauterets, in the valley below, where invalids are wont to take up their residence. An engineer has been putting his wits to work to construct a railway for this journey on an entirely novel plan. His idea is ingenious, whether or not it be practicable. He has planned a railway line like a flight of steps, with an hydraulic lift at each of them. A carriage to convey passengers from the village in the valley to the hot baths up the mountains is run on to the lower step, and started down a slight incline towards the mountain. It is pulled up by a powerful brake as it reaches the platform of the first hydraulic lift, which hoists it up to the second step, when it again runs forward on an incline until it reaches the second lift. This, in like manner, raises the carriage another step, and allows it to run forward, the hydraulic machinery each time raising it rather above its intended destination, so as to get sufficient velocity from gravitation to carry the vehicle forward. Gravitation is the power relied upon for a forward motion, and a powerful waterfall higher up the mountain is brought under the yoke for the vertical lifting. Each lift is placed in a kind of tower, and as there are several of these, and the machinery must be a rather costly item, it must, we should imagine, be a somewhat doubtful experiment financially. The scheme, however, is none the less curious and interesting as an engineering device. Of course, it would be applicable only to such special circumstances as are to be found at La Raillière. A good head of water would be indispensable; and this feature in the neighbourhood may possibly permit of the idea being carried out.





[A CHEERLESS WELCOME.]

## HER BITTER FOE; OR, A STRUGGLE FOR A HEART.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Lost Through Gold," "Strong Temptation,"**&c., &c.*

## CHAPTER XXII.

A NOBLE RIVAL.

Therefore if thine enemy hunger feed him; if he thirst give him drink, for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

KEITH JOCELYN'S unloved wife, the woman whom her husband believed to be sleeping in a village churchyard far away, remained in her own room whilst he paid the visit to Sir Claude which ended so differently to his wishes.

For the first time Magdalen began to doubt the wisdom of her self-sacrifice. She had erred from the noblest, the most unselfish of motives, for Keith's sake. To free him of the chain he found so irksome she had voluntarily effaced her own identity. It was only now a suspicion came to her that her act instead of bringing him happiness might cause him supreme pain.

She understood that he loved Ethel Devreux, daughter of the proud, stately gentleman who treated her with such courteous kindness. The poor wife knew that when Keith loved once he would love for always. He would marry this fair-haired daughter of an ancient house. Innocent children might be born to them, and, alas! if ever the truth were discovered his loved wife would be no wife, his brave boys and pretty girls no true heirs of the grand old name he prized.

Magdalen was lost in anxious thought. It spoke much for the higher part of her nature that her rival's fate should cause her so much anxiety. Many women would have rejoiced in the triumph that might one day be hers, but Magdalen never thought of rejoicing; her one idea was how to save Sir Claude's daughter from the sorrow that might be coming to her.

She would save Ethel if she could. But nothing should induce her to reveal her own secret. Anything was better than that Keith should once more, because of her, become a lonely wanderer from everything fair and pleasant.

She thought until thought itself became keenest anguish. The blue veins swelled until they stood out like thick cords upon her forehead. Dark circles came beneath her eyes.

"This will never do," reflected Magdalen. "If I am to help Miss Devreux Sir Claude must never suspect that her lover's coming cost me a second thought. Her lover! Oh! Keith, my darling, I never thought when I made up my mind you should be free how very soon you would give up your freedom and bind yourself afresh."

She bathed her face until the tell-tale tear-stains disappeared. She brushed her soft hair until it gleamed like rich gold in the sunlight. Then she coiled it round her head, arranged her simple black dress, fastened a rose at her throat, and was ready to meet her employer.

She loved Keith as truly as Ethel, and many would have thought her to the full as beautiful as Miss Devreux, only it was riper, more developed beauty. Ethel would have done for the emblem of spring, Magdalen of summer.

Sir Claude thought he had never seen her look so fair, and once again it occurred to him that he was not too old to think of a second marriage. He was very silent until the servants had left the room, then, instead of lingering over his wine, he followed Mrs. Grey at once to the drawing-room.

"I want to talk to you."

She laid aside her work, some pretty trifle of

embroidery, and looked up at him with her clear eyes.

"My daughter is coming home to-morrow."

"So soon?" a little surprise betraying itself in her manner.

"I should like you to know everything," said the baronet, confidentially. "Mr. Jocelyn came here this afternoon to ask for my consent to his marriage with Ethel."

"Indeed?"

Much as she longed to know what had passed at the interview she would not ask a single question. She tried hard to show a little interest in Keith Jocelyn's wooing as she would have done in a stranger's. It was a difficult task, but Magdalen was used to difficulties, and she conquered this one.

"I have refused unhesitatingly," declared Sir Claude. "I told Mr. Jocelyn that so long as I had any power over my daughter she should never be his wife."

"Was it not rather a harsh decision?" deprecatingly, "considering how much they have been together."

Sir Claude got angry on the spot.

"Women are all alike," he cried, impatiently. "They never will see that a man has a right to interfere in his daughter's marriage."

"I beg your pardon, Sir Claude, I had no intention of offending you. I forgot," biting her lip, "that your housekeeper was engaged to order your dinner, not to express an opinion respecting your daughter's marriage."

"You are very hard," said the baronet, bitterly, "you will keep throwing the shop in my teeth."

"The shop?" opening her large eyes. "What shop, Sir Claude? I spoke of none."

"Your position," irritably. "I do wish you would try to forget that you ever came to Devreux Court as a housekeeper."

Magdalen smiled. That sweet, wistful smile that always touched Sir Claude in spite of himself.

"If I did forget it I should have to resign all interference in your affairs. The servants would

then hold supreme sway. I understood you had tried that experiment and found it an unsuccessful one, Sir Claude."

"You know perfectly well what I mean," returned the baronet, crossly. "If you would only consider yourself my friend and not make those absurd speeches about being only the house-keeper I should like it much better."

"Would you?" dreamily. "But then you might think I was presuming, Sir Claude."

For all answer the baronet took her hand with every sign of respect, and said, simply:

"I have never been so happy at Devreux Court since I can remember as I have been since you came. If only you would remember that you would not make those absurd speeches about your position."

"Well, I will promise not to make any more. I daresay your daughter will think me very presuming and ill-mannered. But remember it will be your fault if she do so and not mine."

"I will remember."

"At what hour do you expect Miss Devreux?"

"I suppose I must go up to town and fetch her. She has never taken a journey alone in her life."

"Then you had certainly better go. I will give all the needful orders. Shall I expect you to dinner, Sir Claude?"

"Yes. Don't make it any later," in reply to a suggestion of hers. "The less time I stay in London the better I shall be pleased."

"You do not care for London?"

"I do not care for the errand on which I am going."

"Is there no one you could send instead?"

"No one. Unless," with a sudden thought, "you would undertake the commission yourself, Mrs. Grey."

She bent her eyes on the ground as she answered.

"I fear I should be a very bad ambassador."

"It would not be pleasant for you?"

"Nor yet for Miss Devreux."

"Ah! you don't understand Ethel."

"I understand enough to feel she would not like a stranger to accompany her on a long journey when her thoughts are as sad as they are likely to be to-morrow."

"Will you come with me?"

"I?" abruptly.

"You have been buried in the country for some months now. A change would do you good."

"I am quite well."

"Still, even people who are quite well take a change sometimes," persisted the baronet. "Be persuaded by me. Come up to town and see if a little pleasure does not agree with you thoroughly."

She shook her head.

"It would be no pleasure."

Sir Claude looked so very angry that Magdalen saw he had misinterpreted her words.

"You do not understand," she explained, simply. "I am much obliged to you for your proposal, it is most kind of you to think of it, but there are reasons why I could never enjoy myself in London. Why, the very name of the place sounds sad to me."

"I see," said Sir Claude, remorsefully. "You lived there with your husband."

Mrs. Grey did not contradict the statement. Sir Claude pushed his inquiries a little further.

"Is it long since you lost him?"

"It is some years," thinking of the day when she lost him for all time just as surely as though she had seen him die. "Please do not speak of it, Sir Claude. I cannot bear it even now."

The baronet was touched by the sight of her evident emotion.

"It was a hard blow to be left a widow so young," he said, sympathetically.

"Magdalen sighed.

"I feel old enough," she said, simply. "I often wonder if one counts time by one's troubles instead of by months and years."

"Perhaps! But I hope there are no more troubles in store for you, Mrs. Grey. While I

live I shall do my best to make the Court a happy home to you. I shall indeed."

Magdalen smiled a little wistfully.

"You are very kind, Sir Claude, but I hope I shall not live many years. I have hoped so for a long time now, ever since I lost him."

The baronet was angrier than she had ever seen him.

"Of all the wicked, presumptuous ideas to come into a woman's head," he cried, indignantly. "Not live long indeed. I suppose it's this dull house has given you the melancholies. I shall call on the doctor as I pass to-morrow on my way to the station and send him round at once."

In spite of Mrs. Grey's protestations Sir Claude was as good as his word. Dr. Morton, the village surgeon, was fairly startled when he saw the dog-cart with its noble grey stopping at his door.

Since the days of Ethel's childish ailments he had never been sent for to the Court, except occasionally to the servants, and even they seemed to enjoy a wonderful stock of good health.

The immunity of Sir Claude and his establishment from sickness had long been a standing grievance to the doctor. Sir Claude threw the reins to his groom, alighted, and was shown with due form into Dr. Morton's consulting-room. The baronet looked worthy of his old name and his high birth. He was attired in a morning suit, scrupulously plain, yet with all needful regard to the prevailing fashion.

"I want you to go to the Court at once, Morton," he said, energetically. "Mrs. Grey is not at all well."

The doctor knew every whisper of the local gossip, and said, half as an assertion:

"Your housekeeper, Sir Claude?"

The baronet's eyes flashed.

"No, sir," decidedly, "the lady who is kind enough to preside over my comfort."

Dr. Morton felt snubbed. He inquired what was the matter.

"I think the heat has been too much for her, combined with the dulness of the Court. I shall look to you to set her to rights. I am going up to London to fetch my daughter."

The impression conveyed to the surgeon by these words was that Miss Devreux was being brought home simply and solely that she might minister to the comfort and amusement of Mrs. Grey, and the effect upon him was great.

"I will go to the Court at once, Sir Claude," he said, obsequiously, "and you may depend upon my giving the case my very best attention."

When he reached Devreux and was shown into the drawing-room the changes in the apartment struck him at once. There were unmistakable signs of a woman's presence and taste.

Rich flowers stood in the beautiful old vases, the piano was open, and some music was scattered on the desk; a trifle of fancy work was on the table. From being the oddest, bleakest room he knew, Dr. Morton decided this had changed into the most charming.

"Perhaps Mrs. Grey is an old friend of Sir Claude," reflected the doctor, as he waited; "people said she meant to be Lady Devreux. From all I see I shouldn't be surprised if she succeeded. I wonder how the young lady will like it?"

His reflections were put a stop to by the entrance of a tall, graceful figure, dressed from head to foot in black, a snowy linen collar and cuffs alone relieving the sombreness of her attire.

It chanced that the two had never met before. The doctor attended chapel; Mrs. Grey sat in the Devreux pew at the village church. It was a singular fact that in all her walks and drives she had never met the medical man.

She bowed to him with simple grace, and then sat down on the sofa.

"Sir Claude wished you to see me," she began, simply, "but indeed there is no necessity. I am perfectly well."

Dr. Morton looked at her keenly, and decided that for once Sir Claude's judgment was thoroughly to be trusted. He did not say anything

alarming, merely suggested that as he was there the baronet would be more satisfied if he prescribed some simple treatment.

So he began to ask a few questions, and Mrs. Grey answered them. There was no reserve in her manner. She little knew the dread suspicion which had arisen in his mind. She told him her age, that all her relations were dead; she did not even show offence when he seemed disposed to discover the cause of their deaths.

"You must be laughing at me," she said, at last. "If all these questions are needful when there is nothing the matter, how many would you ask in a case of real illness?"

"Not half the number, probably."

"Well," with the wistful smile which always pained Sir Claude, "you have been very patient and painstaking, Dr. Morton. I hope if Sir Claude asks you you will tell him I am quite well."

"I shall say you are a little weak from the continued hot weather, but that I see no cause for alarm at present."

She never noticed the stress he laid upon the two last words.

He continued:

"And my prescription is not very dreadful. Don't overexert yourself, and above all things keep free from excitement of all kinds. I believe Miss Devreux is coming home soon. She will be a nice companion for you."

And with a few more chatty remarks the doctor took his leave.

"Well," he said, half aloud, as he walked down the avenue, "I hope Sir Claude does not care for her. It'll be a sad disappointment for him if he does. It's early days to talk, but if things are as I suspect she can't live six months. Poor thing! Poor thing!" He was a feeling man, and had been touched by the colourless face and its extreme delicacy as much as by the brave spirit which scorned complaint. "I think I understood; a heap of troubles on the mind chiefly, and now the reaction's come in Sir Claude's caseful home it's too late. Well, well, I shall do what I can for her, and I shan't tell the baronet what I'm afraid of. If he's got it into his head to make her Lady Devreux he'd be for having half the physicians in London down for her, and they'd do no good, only worry her, poor young thing."

And Magdalen herself had hardly given the doctor's visit a serious thought.

"He's a nice, kind man, and it was very generous and thoughtful of Sir Claude to insist upon his coming, but I'm sure he saw directly there was nothing the matter with me. What a curious old gentleman he was. I thought he never would have done asking about poor papa and my brothers and sisters, who died, nearly all of them, before I was born."

She went upstairs to direct the servants in the preparations they were making for Miss Devreux's return. In a household like the Court this personal superintendence was hardly necessary, but Magdalen had set her heart on doing all she could to ensure Ethel's creature comfort. As far as in her power was, Keith's darling should be happy.

She soon learned Miss Devreux was not a favourite in the servants' hall.

"My young lady has never seemed to belong to us," said Jolliffe, simply. "Why, ma'am, ever since she was a tiny child she's been more of a Jocelyn than a Devreux, and I'm sure she loves the Manor a great deal better than the old Court."

"But it was a dull life for a child here, Jolliffe."

Jolliffe opened his eyes.

"I daresay it was, ma'am, and it's not my place to say a word against the master's daughter, only you see, ma'am, one can't feel the same as if she had been brought up here."

Magdalen tried not to heed the butler's complaints. She went on with her preparations. She robbed the drawing-room of many an ornament that Ethel's apartments might be the more daintily furnished. She begged more flowers of the gardener than she had ever done before.

At last all was finished. The pictures, the bookshelves, the old tapestry curtains, the rare glass



and china, all that Mrs. Grey could gather together to do honour to Ethel, had been arranged in harmonious beauty.

"It looks splendid," said cook. "Law, me'am, what taste you have."  
"Miss Ethel ought to be pleased," said Joliffe.

But Magdalen—who knew the sorrow that would be raging at Ethel's heart, the cruel disappointment which was the cause of Ethel's return to the Court—doubted if anything there would please her. She made up her mind to be very patient if all her little efforts were disregarded.

"She is so young," thought Keith's neglected wife, pitifully. "She has been used to be so happy, and now she is separated from him we must expect her to be very sad."

The carriage went to the station to meet Sir Claude and his daughter. Magdalen wondered dimly whether she ought to receive them in the hall. She decided finally that she might excuse herself from that ceremony. In honour of the daughter of the house she changed her dress for a long, flowing grenadine and picked a fresh bunch of her favourite yellow roses for her throat. Then, with a tumult at her heart she could not subdue, she sat down in the drawing-room to await the arrival.

They were late, so late that Magdalen began to fear something had made them lose the train, but at last the welcome sound of wheels was heard, and a few seconds later Sir Claude entered the drawing-room.

"Where is Miss Devreux?" surprised that he came in alone.

"She has gone upstairs. They told us dinner was ready. Did Morton come, Mrs. Grey?"

"Yes," with a smile. "I think he was very much amused at being sent for."

"He had no right to be. I shall be down almost directly. We will not wait for Ethel."

But this was a slight Mrs. Grey could not have offered to the young daughter of the Devreux. Forgetting all fear of her reception she went upstairs and tapped lightly at the door of Ethel's dressing-room. No answer came. She tried again.

"Come in."

Ethel was sitting huddled up in a low leaping chair. She still wore the blue cashmere in which her journey had been made. Indeed, all she had done in the way of toilet was to throw off her hat and gloves. Her golden hair hung round her unloosed from its coils, and a look of unutterable despair was on her face.

She stared at Magdalen in dim surprise. A lady dressed, if plainly, yet suitably, for the evening. What could she be doing at Devreux Court? Ethel's recollections of dinners then included her father's shooting jacket and Mrs. Johnson's linsey gown.

"I have come to tell you that dinner is ready, Miss Devreux," in a soft, musical voice.

"I shall not come down."

"Would you like your dinner sent up?"

"I will think." Then, curiously conquering her indifference. "Are you staying here?"

"I am Sir Claude's housekeeper."

"Oh!" There was such an unpleasant stress upon the word "Oh" that Magdalen felt embarrassed. "I will change my mind and come down. You can tell my maid to come and do my hair."

Magdalen forgave this ordering of herself about just as she would have forgiven anything else to the poor, unhappy girl before her.

On the stairs she met Joliffe, to whom she entrusted Ethel's message. Then she went to the dining-room where Sir Claude was awaiting her.

Dinner was laid for three. Magdalen was endeavouring to take the side place unnoticed, but Sir Claude saw her object and defeated it.

"Pray take your own place, Mrs. Grey." Then, for the benefit of Joliffe and the footmen in attendance: "Remember you are still the actual mistress of the Court. Ethel is too young. Besides, her stay may be somewhat uncertain," thinking of the hint which Rosalie Norton had dropped respecting the Marquis of Allonby,

and resolving to act upon it by inviting Jack to Devreux Court.

They had almost finished their soup when Ethel appeared. She raised her eyebrows as she noticed that her place was left at the side, but she said nothing.

Sir Claude introduced her to Mrs. Grey with the usual politeness shown in presenting one lady to another. But Ethel was a spoilt child. Just now she was in no mood to see anything in pleasant colours. She never spoke a word during the repast, and the two who had been used to find this tête-à-tête dinner one of the pleasantest episodes of the day found her presence a decided constraint.

Mrs. Grey hesitated when the meal was over whether she should follow Ethel into the drawing-room or not. Her whole heart yearned towards the girl.

She forgave her her share in her husband's heart because of all the suffering that share had brought her.

She went into the gardens first. There was something in the beauty of the out-door world which always calmed her when she was in trouble. Then, as the sun faded, she went back to see how it fared with the young daughter of the Devreuxes.

Ethel was on the sofa, her eyes closed as though sleeping, so Magdalen did not speak to her, but went across to the piano, and, opening it, sat down to sing—no grand modern song, only old ballads she knew by heart and could play almost without any light at all.

As she ended one she saw a slight figure standing beside her in the gloaming, and felt Ethel Devreux's hand on her shoulder.

"Did you sing that because of me?" alluding to a touching love ditty just finished.

Magdalen shook her head.

"There are tears in your eyes," went on Ethel. "Are you crying for me, or have you a sorrow of your own?"

"My sorrow is an old one," said Magdalen, brokenly; "it is buried in a grave. But that is no reason I cannot feel for yours, Miss Devreux."

"Call me Ethel," pleaded the girl, touched by the sweetness of Magdalen's voice, "and forgive me for being so horrid to you."

"There is nothing to forgive."

"I am so unhappy," continued Ethel. "It is all so strange here. I miss them so."

And then Magdalen whispered of the future, bright dreams yet to come.

"No sorrow lasted for ever," she said, tenderly. "You and Mr. Jocelyn will have plenty of happy years after this separation."

And pressing a kiss upon her cheek in payment for those words, Keith Jocelyn's love laid his fair head down upon the shoulder of his neglected wife, and began a friendship only broken by death.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### ROSALIE'S PLOT THICKENS.

Sweet is revenge, especially to women.

We must go back to Rosalie Norton. We left her at the moment when, with a glad triumph at her heart, she passed through the French windows of Sir Claude's library out into the beautiful grounds of Devreux Court.

Rosalie had not that keen sympathy with Nature's work which so distinguished Keith Jocelyn's wife, but she could not be quite insensible to the lovely scene before her.

And this was Ethel's birthplace. Small wonder that, even as a child, she had been proud of her descent, and turned to the pupil-teacher with scorn as "not of us." Yet even while she understood how natural such a course had been Rosalie Norton was no whit nearer forgiving the slight than she had been long years before at St. Alban's.

The vengeance she had threatened then seemed very near now. She and Ethel were struggling for the same heart, and she meant to be victorious. Already she regarded Ethel's defeat as certain.

Carlos de Rossi was waiting where his divinity had left him. He raised his beautiful eyes as she approached.

"You look happy," he said, softly. "Rosalie, mia, will you not tell me what secret brought you here, and whom you have seen?"

"I cannot, Carlos," gently. "Indeed, indeed it would have been better had you remained in Italy."

"I do not think so; at least, here I know that we breathe the same air. Each day some happy chance may bring about a meeting. That is why I came, why I stay."

Rosalie Norton sighed. Great as was her own love for Keith Jocelyn, there was something in the count's devotion to herself almost beyond her comprehension. It was not the passion of his worship, but its selfishness.

They went back to London together. Carlos put his darling into a carriage to drive to her grandfather's, and then went back to his hotel. Gentle Mrs. Norton was delighted when she saw her niece.

"Wherever you have been it has done you good, Rosalie. I never saw you look so happy."

"I feel happy," softly. "Aunt Fanny, you will never ask me where I have been, will you?"

And what could Mrs. Norton do but promise? It was an evening often looked back to by Rosalie. There was a large ball at her aunt's friend, the Countess of Clevedon's. None of the Jocelyn party were present (we know how they spent that evening, the one before Keith left for Devreux Court), but a brilliant train of admirers attended Rosalie, and one and all found her charming. There was a light in her eyes, a sparkle in her conversation, which seemed to claim all present as her captives.

"That girl will have a history," said a celebrated novelist to an eminent R.A., who stood watching Rosalie as she danced.

"Women with such faces usually have."

"Ay, but hers will be an uncommon one. I don't know which I should pity most, the man she accepted or the one she refused. One will be a slave all his days, the other most likely spend his life in regretting her decision. She is like a serpent for all her beauty."

The Count Rossi heard the words, and would gladly have knocked the speakers down. Such conduct being impossible in an English ball-room, he contented himself with staring at them so persistently that at last they became conscious of it, and moved out of his vicinity.

For two days after the ball Rosalie Norton kept clear of Cadogan Street. Upon the third she remarked to her aunt her conviction that Maude Jocelyn must be ill, it was such an age since she had seen her. They had an idle afternoon. Should they not drive round and inquire?

The countess was indisposed, but Miss Jocelyn was disengaged. That ascertained, Rosalie alighted, arranging with her indulgent aunt to call for her again later. She followed the servant into the pretty morning-room, which, as an intimate, she had long been free of.

Maude, paler and more thoughtful than usual, was sitting near the window. She rose and kissed her friend affectionately. She had not the slightest suspicion of Rosalie's real character, and believed entirely in her professions of friendship.

"What is the matter?" asked Miss Norton, as she sat down and fondled Maude's hand in a pretty, caressing manner peculiar to herself. "You look as if you had seen a ghost."

"Do I?" trying to smile, and failing signally in the effort. "It must have been here then, Rosalie, for I have not been out since the day before yesterday."

"So I thought. I came to see why you were hiding from all your friends."

Maude hesitated. It seemed unkind to have concealments from such an affectionate friend.

"I am in very bad spirits for one thing."

"You look it," kindly. "Your pretty eyes are as red as if you had been crying for hours."

"I believe I have."

Rosalie opened her eyes.

"But what is the matter? Surely the countess is not seriously ill? The man told us she was indisposed, but surely—"

"Oh, no, mamma is only tired. It is about Ethel."

And Maude's eyes filled.

"Miss Devreux?" sympathetically. "Is she ill?"

"No. Sir Claude has fetched her home."

"It is very sad for you."

"Oh, I miss her so!"

"But still perhaps Sir Claude is particular, and as she was engaged to Mr. Jocelyn, he may have thought it not *comme il faut* for her to stay."

"Oh, you don't understand," cried Maude. "That horrible Sir Claude will not hear of the engagement. He says he shall never give his consent, and you see Ethel is only eighteen."

"She looks older."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes; well, she will be twenty-one before so many years pass, and then—"

"That is small comfort for lovers," said Maude, wistfully. "They are both nearly heart-broken. Ethel is never to come to us, or even write to us. I believe Sir Claude means to keep her shut up at Devreux Court until she comes of age."

"And your brother?"

"Keith says very little, but I am sure he feels it bitterly."

"Still waters run deep," thoughtfully.

"Yes; how well you understand it."

"Love is a strange thing," reflectively. "I think it's a pity people ever love at all."

So did Maude, apparently, for she answered nothing, and silence gives consent. Then they talked on of other topics. Sir Claude's eccentric conduct was to make no difference in Lady Jocelyn's plans. She intended to remain in town until quite the end of the season.

"And then we are to go abroad or to the seaside," said Maude, confidentially.

"I thought you always went to Jocelyn."

"We could not this year with Ethel so near and yet forbidden to see us."

"Will you come to Norton?"

"Oh, Rosalie!"

"Why not? Aunt Fanny and grandpapa shall ask the countess in all due form if you will only say you would like it."

"I should like it dearly. I feel so lost without Ethel, and you are so good to me, Rosalie."

A white, ashen look of pain crossed Rosalie's face. She pressed Maude's hand till she almost bruised the delicate flesh.

"You must never say that again!" she cried, fiercely. "I am anything in the world but good. I sometimes fancy I am the most wicked creature on God's beautiful earth, only I always loved you, Maude, always."

The two girls sat on talking pleasantly together until the old butler brought in afternoon tea, and soon after Mrs. Norton called to fetch Rosalie, not before Maude had promised to lunch with her friend the next day.

"Whither away, child?"

It was Keith who asked the question. He had come round to Cadogan Street, to find his mother lying down with a bad headache, and Maude, in the daintiest of morning toilets, stepping into the open carriage.

"I am going to lunch with the Nortons. Rosalie came yesterday to ask me."

Keith jumped in after his sister.

"I may as well go too," he said, deliberately; "it won't do to lose all my friends and acquaintances because Sir Claude Devreux thinks me unfit to be his son-in-law."

Maude marvelled at the extreme bitterness of his voice.

"Are you vexed with me for accepting Rosalie's invitation?" she asked, timidly. "You know mamma said things had better go on as usual while we are in town."

"You are quite right to go, childie. We can't all eschew society until Ethel is of age. If only she had had a little more courage we should never have been parted."

At this time, though he loved her with all his

heart and soul, Keith had by no means forgiven Ethel for her refusal to become his wife at once without her father's consent. He was very sore still upon this point. He loved her so intensely he thought she ought to have trusted entirely to that love; his passion for her was so overwhelming that he was rather exacting in his expectations, and she had disappointed them.

"You are quite right to go," he said to his little sister, kindly. "It would only be an additional sorrow to me if this affair deprived you of any pleasure, and you seem to like Miss Norton very much."

"I do like her very much, better than any girl I know—except Ethel."

Keith could have re-echoed her words, they so entirely expressed his own feelings.

Mrs. Norton received the brother and sister with hospitable kindness. Rosalie had just come in from a ride; she was changing her habit. The aunt had only just concluded this apology when her niece appeared.

She and Keith sat next each other at lunch, and our hero could not but notice a softened gravity in her manner which was very charming. Mrs. Norton began some inquiry about Miss Devreux's absence, but Rosalie skilfully changed the conversation.

"You must forgive Aunt Fanny," she whispered to Keith, under cover of some long speech of Lord Norton's; "she does not know."

"And you do?"

"I suspect."

"Sir Claude has not a very high opinion of my merits," said Keith, with an uneasy laugh, "but there is nothing for it but to wait until he gains one, I suppose."

"Is there not?" Her beautiful eyes were fixed full upon his face. "If you both love each other, why need you wait?"

The question fanned Keith's slumbering resentment against his love into a flame. Here was a girl, as high-born, as beautiful as Ethel, suggesting the course Ethel had scorned. The daughter of the Nortons would have sacrificed the world's opinion, ay, and deemed the world itself well lost for love's sake. Ethel would not abate one iota of the ceremony she deemed befitting her marriage.

It was Rosalie's strongest weapon, this making Keith doubt Ethel's love, and she used it skilfully. It was at this quiet lunch she inserted the "thin end of the wedge" so well known in the old proverb.

Her vengeance was a cruel one, but it was ripening rapidly.

(To be Continued.)

At the present time the capital sunk in Atlantic cables is about £11,000,000 sterling, and the length of the cable is about 20,000 miles.

It costs an average of £1 14s. 7½d. a year to educate a child in a voluntary school, and £2 1s. 11½d. to educate him in a Board school; so it appears from the report of the Committee of Council just issued.

EX-QUEEN ISABELLA of Spain has a fan for every day in the year.

Who invented leap year? Most people would answer Julius Caesar, or the astronomical expert who advised him. Mr. Samuel Sharpe, however, advocates, with much appearance of learning, the claim to the honour of Ichnophys, the Egyptian astronomer, and assigns the date to a period more than three centuries before the Christian era.

THE King of the Sandwich Islands purposes visiting France, Germany, Austria, and the United States of America before returning to his own little island home. He is already invited by the Emperor of Austria to reside at the Palace. He is already decorated with the Order of Francis Joseph, as the Emperor of Austria is decorated with the Order of Kaméamea.

POWER of selecting a husband—by inspection it might be called—is a privilege of princesses of the house of Otham, and is carried to such an

extent that, even if the favoured gentleman already possesses a wife, he must divorce her and wed the Sultana.

CONSUMPTION.—Physicians used to hold that a fatal issue must follow the formation of tubercles on the lungs. So long as tubercular formations could be arrested, there was hope of a patient's recovery; but when these had planted themselves in the lungs their growth was inevitable and fatal. But nature is wiser than physicians, and teaches those who study her ways valuable lessons. Careful dissection in recent years has brought to light many curious facts. Foremost among these is the certainty that consumption, in its tubercular form, is often cured. A series of post-mortem examinations, in an Edinburgh hospital, disclosed the fact that the lungs of one-third of the persons who died after thirty years of age bore marks of tubercles whose growth had been checked, and in many cases the disease wholly cured. Part of the lungs had even been destroyed and the cavities filled by the contraction and adhesion of the walls. In some cases fibrous tissue had completely enclosed the parts disintegrated by disease. If consumption is curable, as these facts seem to indicate, scientific physicians will never rest till they have ascertained the most effective methods of treatment.

#### HOW TO PRESERVE THE TEETH.

THE following directions for the care of the teeth have been issued by the medical committee of the National Dental Hospital, London:

The teeth should be cleaned at least once a day, the best time being night—the last thing. For this purpose use a soft brush, on which take a little soap, and then some prepared chalk, brushing up and down and across. There is rarely any objection to the friction causing the gum to bleed slightly.

Avoid all rough usage of the teeth, such as cracking nuts, biting thread, etc., as by so doing even good, sound teeth may be injured.

When decay is first observed advice should be sought. It is the stopping in a small hole that is of the greatest service, though not unfrequently a large filling preserves the teeth for years.

It is of the greatest importance that children from four years and upward should have their teeth frequently examined by the dental surgeon, to see that the first set, particularly the back teeth, are not decaying too early, and to have the opportunity of timely treatment for the regulation and preservation of the second set.

Children should be taught to rinse the mouth night and morning, and to begin the use of the tooth-brush early, likewise the toothpick.

With regard to the food of children, to those who are old enough whole meal bread, porridge and milk should be given. This is much more wholesome and substantial food than white bread.

If the foregoing instructions are carried out comparatively few teeth would have to be extracted.

#### COLOGNE CATHEDRAL.

THE year 1880 will long remain a memorable one in the annals of that ancient city which rises crescent-wise on the left bank of the Rhine. In the autumn of that year, king and kaiser, princes and prelates met to celebrate with pomp and pageantry the completion of the most magnificent specimen of Gothic architecture in Germany, the Cathedral Church of Cologne. After an interval of six hundred years, the original design of the nameless architect stands perfected in stone. No incomplete fragment now mars its beautiful proportions. The lofty choir built by General de Reil, the delicate beauty of its double aisles, the lancet arches, and forest of tall pillars, are now complete.



At that distant period, six centuries from our time, when Cologne ranked as a city of the first importance, Frederick Barbarossa presented to it the far-famed relics of the three Wise Kings, which were brought to Milan from the East by the Italians of the First Crusade, and which had been rescued when the Lombard capital was levelled with the dust. The Archbishop Conrad of Hochsteden and the Municipal Council of Cologne determined to erect a shrine for this precious treasure which should surpass in grandeur every sacred edifice in Europe. Thus it was at the period of the city's greatest prosperity, amid the splendid pageantry of mediæval times, that the stones brought from the Drachenfels were first laid for this great minster of St. Peter, which, like those of Strasburg and Mayence, belonged to the black-robed order of St. Augustine. During all the stormy vicissitudes of later times, in that age of war, corruption and misery which marked the close of the fourteenth century, the half-built tower and crumbling walls of the church still followed the fortunes of the state. Abandoned, all but wrecked, the cathedral for three hundred years was typical of those dark days which overshadowed the fatherland. Now, however, their destinies are fulfilled together; and this stately edifice remains not only a monument of ancient art, but a type of German unity. Reaching above the town to a height of five hundred feet, the twin towers, high-crowned with the lace-like fabric of their spires, look over the red-tiled roofs to that noble river, which, rising among the gorges and glaciers of the Grisons, washes with its rapid waters the fortified walls of Cologne.

All kinds of legends and superstitions seem to have taken root under the shadow of the ancient fane. Among the quaint old German records is the mythical history of the "great design." We are told that the archbishop offered an almost unlimited reward for the plan of a cathedral that should be worthy of the great treasure, a fitting shrine for the kings. A year was given in which the architects, among whom were many from the large towns of Europe, were to complete their designs. An architect of Cologne determined to make his name famous for all time. He was haunted by a vision of a grand and beautiful cathedral, vaulted and crowded with columns, perfect in style and ornament; but he laboured for many weary months in vain to give some visible form to this wondrous dream. At last, in disappointment and despair, he fled to the Siebengebirge, where, after wandering for many hours in a fearful storm, he found himself near a majestic oak; and at that moment, amid the appalling thunder, which seemed to shake the earth, a flash of lightning blazed upon the tree; and from beneath it came a figure clad in scarlet mantle and slouching hat, who saluted him with the title of Dom-architect. Approaching nearer, the stranger said: "I know well the cause of your despair. Accept my conditions, and the dream shall be realised;" then unfolding a roll of parchment, on which was drawn the perfect plan of the visionary cathedral in all its elaborate detail, he repeated: "Sign my conditions with your blood; the scroll is yours, and your name shall live for ever."

Wild with terror and with desire for fame, the man signed away his soul, and thus became possessed of the wondrous plan, which was hailed with astonishment and delight by the authorities of Cologne. They féted and caressed the fortunate architect, and inscribed his name on a tablet which was inserted in the walls of the church. But as time went on he became a prey to nameless melancholy; and at last, unable to support the misery that oppressed his soul, he fled for comfort to a hermit who dwelt in the Eifel Mountains. This holy man promised him absolution, after prayer and penance; and conjured him to lead a penitential life in order to save his soul. At last the architect died; and on that night—so the legend runs—amid thunder and lightning, the brazen tablet was torn from the unfinished tower.

Though the name of the inspired genius who designed Cologne Cathedral has been lost to the

world, his mighty work now remains the wonder and admiration of beholders.

## TRUE TILL DEATH; OR, A FAILURE OF JUSTICE.

### CHAPTER XII.

Why, all delights are vain; but that most vain  
Which, with pain purchased, doth inherit pain.

As time passed on the state of things at Stoneyvale did not improve. By constant indulgence Eleanor's passionate temper became more violent and her shrewish tongue more bitter; and Dennis, worn out by her constant bickering, was less guarded in his conduct towards her, and often enough taunt was answered by taunt, reviling by reviling, and soon each felt how galling was the chain that bound one to the other; and Dennis, who in spite of his hasty temper, was a man who loved peace and harmony in his home, became morose and bitter, passed most of his day away at Garford shooting and horseracing, and shunned Stoneyvale and his wife's company and the society of the few old friends who still clung to him, spite of all that had passed.

The affairs of the farm were, as a matter of course, left to the hands of hirelings, and ere long the poor returns the land yielded would have warned a less preoccupied or less reckless man than Vanstone that his substance was being wasted and his interests little cared for by his employés. He spent much money too now, far more than he would have dared to spend a year or two earlier, and Eleanor made no small demands on his purse.

She had an insatiable love for dress and display, and had taken to cultivating a large circle of acquaintances in the neighbouring town, who were constantly entertained at Stoneyvale and made welcome to the best the house contained whenever they chose to make their appearance at its too hospitable doors.

Dennis had once or twice expostulated and pointed out to his wife that her extravagance was more than his pocket could possibly stand, but when he complained of her expensive dresses she retorted by enumerating the hunters that stood in his stable, and declared that she spent far less on her poor little dinners and picnics than he lost at races and pigeon matches; and Dennis was at length fain to hold his tongue. Perhaps there was more truth in what she reproached him with than he cared to own. At any rate, it was easier and pleasanter for the moment to yield than to fight—he was thankful to get out of hearing of her shrill, angry voice, away into the quiet fields with his gun and dogs to dream away the day till the time came when he could repair to the town to spend the evening with some sporting friends and forget his troubles.

But things could not go on in this way for ever.

Dennis had a visit from his man of business, who, with a long face, informed him that he must retrench, and that speedily, or he would be a ruined man.

Even then it was hard to get him to look matters in the face and take the necessary steps for averting the threatened evil, and not until a bailiff arrived with a writ against him for a large sum owing to a London milliner and another from a fashionable jeweller, with whom, unknown to her husband, Eleanor had run up a long bill, did he rouse himself to any active interest in his affairs.

When all his debts and liabilities were laid before him, together with many of Eleanor's, which she had carefully kept concealed from him, he saw at a glance the truth—he was ruined. It would take years to recover himself and pay off the burden of debt that now weighed

so heavily on his shoulders that it threatened to crush him.

His interview with Eleanor was stormy enough, but he had roused himself thoroughly at last from the suicidal torpor into which he had so long ago fallen, and for once even his wife's angry tongue failed to turn him from his purpose.

"We must retrench, Eleanor," he said. "I have given Gadsby orders to sell the hunters and the ponies."

"Sell my ponies!" cried Eleanor, her eyes flashing. "And what do you expect I am to do? Walk through the muddy roads to Garford every day? A likely thing truly!"

"I shall keep Jack and the dog-cart—when you want to go into Garford I can drive you there. But as to going over there every day as you do now it won't be necessary. Your grand friends will not care to know you when they find you are poor and cannot entertain them in the way you have been accustomed to," replied Dennis, gravely.

"What! Am I to be dependent on you for my drives?" cried Eleanor. "Then rely upon it I shall take to walking in good earnest. And as to my friends, I give you notice they will be as welcome to my house as heretofore. I am not going to shut my door in their faces and mope myself to death in this dismal old place just to help to pay your racing debts, and of that I give you fair warning."

"It is to pay your debts as well as mine that I must insist on your economising, Eleanor," replied Dennis, patiently; "and even with the strictest economy I hardly see how we shall get on. We are in such a position now that a sudden loss or a bad harvest would utterly ruin us, and I might have to sell my property and begin life afresh in a foreign land. Poor old Hartford, how sorry I should be to leave it."

"You always take the bad view of everything, Dennis; you are enough to drive one mad," returned Eleanor, impatiently. "Why in the world should we have a bad harvest or a sudden loss? It's horrible enough to have to give up the ponies without being told one is going to be ruined. It's very hard I should have to do it—very hard. If you had only listened to me and, instead of attending those abominable race-meetings stayed at home and helped me to entertain my friends and made yourself a little agreeable in your own house we shouldn't be in this state now." And the tears began to gather in her eyes. "As to going and beginning life in a foreign land and all that sort of rubbish, you may go if you like, I never will—be sure of that," and she swept defiantly out of the room.

Dennis remained seated at his writing-table, laden with letters, bills and documents, trying hard to bring his chaos of letters and accounts into something like order, and now that it was too late regretting that he had exercised so little supervision over household matters as well as over his bailiff's affairs. Dozen of small bills were lying unpaid in various shops both in Garford and London, and servants' wages were unpaid.

Eleanor kept no accounts. Everything was at sixes and sevens, and the thought of Hilda's excellently managed establishment, of the ardour and patience with which she had set herself to work when Daniel Ray died to learn how to keep things straight, even her look and blush of delight when he had praised her endeavours, came vividly back to him. What a contrast between her and his wife—between the woman he had lost and the woman he had won.

But the end was nearer than even Dennis Vanstone had imagined, the ruin that he had hinted at as a distant probability was in fact near at hand, and ere six months more were passed the bank at Garford stopped payment, and every penny that Dennis possessed was swallowed up, and he found himself one morning as poor a man in fact as the labourer who tilled his fields or the stable-boy who cleaned his horse.

It was a terrible blow, and for a while Dennis was crushed by it.

Stoneyvale must be sold. The home of his

fathers for so many generations must pass into the hands of strangers. The old house and grounds he loved so well would be his no longer. His name would be forgotten and his place occupied by another. He would have to begin his life all over again as best he could.

It was some days before he could collect himself sufficiently to resolve on a course of action, and at length when he did resolve to look his difficulties steadily in the face and hear the worst, it seemed as if there was but one way open for him. All he had must be sold and he must leave Stoneyvale at once.

"What! You are going to submit to be turned out of your house and property?" sobbed Eleanor, when Dennis, pale and weary, came to tell her the result of his interview with his lawyers.

"Submit, Eleanor! I have no choice. I am a ruined man I tell you," he groaned. "When everything is sold I doubt if there will remain to us, when the debts are paid, above a few hundreds to start us in another land."

"What!" cried Eleanor, starting up from the sofa on which she was sitting with her face buried in the cushion. "What! Are you still harping on leaving England and going to some foreign land?"

"Yes, to Australia," he replied, sadly. "I don't see what else is left for me to do, Eleanor. We may be able to make a fair start there with a small capital and—"

Eleanor laughed. He paused and looked at her in astonishment.

"And do you imagine I shall ever consent to take such a step?" she asked, disdainfully.

"I tell you there is nothing else left for us to do, Eleanor. Be reasonable, and listen to what I have got to tell you, for once in your life. I have talked the whole matter over with Jenkins, and he tells me that with the few hundreds that are left me I could make a fair beginning in—"

"Yes," replied Eleanor, coolly. "You could make a fair beginning, I daresay, but what use should I be to you? I could not help you, I'm sure. It is cruel of you to wish me to go to a savage country like Australia, to hide myself in the bush. I should be miserable, wretched, I should die. I could not endure such a life, and you know it quite well, Dennis. I am surprised at your asking me to do such a thing!"

And she sobbed bitterly again. Dennis looked at her with an expression of half pity, half contempt.

"What is it, then, that you propose to do, Eleanor?" he asked, after a pause. "You will be very, very poor if you stay in England alone. You will find it a very different life living on the little I could allow you to be mistress of Stoneyvale."

"I—I daresay the Corfields would let me live with them, Jane and I have been such friends," said Eleanor, slowly.

"The Corfields?" and Dennis frowned. "I don't like them, Eleanor. I would not willingly leave you with them. Mrs. Corfield is a silly flirt, and Corfield has not enough wit to perceive it."

"Oh, yes, abuse my friends, do. You said no one would care to see me now I was poor, but you see Jane has called twice already, though I did—"

"Yes, she called, certainly," replied Dennis, in a tone of irony. "Not to see you though, but to see the ponies and the piano."

"What! She wants to buy the ponies?" cried Eleanor. "Don't let her have them, Dennis. I wouldn't for the world see her flaunting about in my pony-carriage."

"My poor, silly child," replied Dennis, sadly, "the ponies and carriage too must be sold. What matter who gets them? They are ours no longer. But to return to what we were saying about going to Australia, Eleanor—"

"To Australia! I tell you I will never go to Australia, Dennis, till I know you have got a decent home there to take me to. I had rather go back to the old cottage at Hartford. Now grandmamma is bedridden and has Mary Styles to live with her and look after her, I could make myself pretty comfortable

there, and when grandma dies, which might happen any day now, I shall have the cottage and her money, I know, and could stay there till you are ready for me. Go to Australia if you wish by all means. I daresay it's the best thing you can do; but for Heaven's sake, after ruining me in the way you have done, don't finish it by dragging me away to live in a jungle miles away from any human being except yourself, I beg."

Dennis smiled sadly.

"So it's I who have ruined you, is it, Eleanor?" he said.

"Certainly," she answered, with a great sob.

"Well, I think we are both equally to blame, Eleanor. If I have spent too much, so have you," he answered, wearily.

"Yes," she replied, "but it was you who put money in the Garford bank, not I. Now, if you'd done what Mr. Corfield advised and put it in railway stocks, we should have been as rich as he is by this time."

"Perhaps. I did what I thought best," replied Dennis. "Well, I am to understand then that if I go to Australia you will remain in England, that you decline to accompany me in fact?"

"Exactly," she replied, nodding, and wiping the tears from her eyes. "I hate the idea. It's all well enough for you who are a man and don't care for hard work and all that, but I could never stand a settler's life, I was never intended for it."

"So be it then," replied Dennis, with a sigh. "I'll do my best to arrange things as you wish."

By the way, have you made a list of your jewellery, Eleanor?—that must be given over to Jenkins, too, you know."

"Oh, yes, I've made it," replied Eleanor, sulkily, and Dennis left the room.

And then she rose, and wiping her eyes went slowly up to her room, the room she had spent so much time and thought and money on beautifying, and took from the wardrobe a leathern jewel case, and one by one took out of it the various articles of jewellery, with which it was filled, and laid them on the dressing-table.

Fondly she lingered over a showy set of pink topazes, and tried on for the last time various brooches and rings. Then she went to the wardrobe, took out a pair of brand-new corsets, and opening a costly little workcase that lay on the toilette-table, took from it a needle and thread, and began to sew into the garments various pieces of jewellery, whilst others she restored to their old positions in the box.

"Dennis will never be the wiser," she reflected. "He never noticed this ring young Stevenson gave me, nor Captain Bland's locket. This brooch and bracelet came from Newfield and Hurst's. I don't believe he has ever set eyes on it, and this ring I bought at Garford; I've worn it a dozen times, and he asked me the other day if it wasn't the one grandma gave me on my birthday. I'll put this on to-night, and I defy Mr. Jenkins or anyone else to take my jewellery from me."

And she stitched away with a will, and before half an hour had passed the contents of the jewel case were considerably diminished.

Lastly, she raised the lowest layer of cotton in it, and from beneath it drew forth two bank notes and looked on them complacently.

"I shan't be so very poor after all," she murmured. "Here I have two hundred pounds—at the cottage that will go a long way."

And she sewed them quickly into the stays along with the jewellery, and then with an air of contentment looked round the room.

"They won't take my clothes, I suppose," she thought. "I've some good lace, and I know where to sell it if I'm hard up. Australia! Fancy me living in the bush!" and she almost laughed. "Fancy! what an ending to my life! It's bad enough as it is, but that would be perfectly unbearable. There now, I've finished my preparations, and come what will I've something to fall back on—if Dennis dies, for example, and I'm left a widow I shan't be quite penniless," and she shut the great plate-glass door of the wardrobe after taking a last peep at the

pink topazes and shutting up the jewel case reluctantly, and went downstairs to the drawing-room.

"I may as well go down to the cottage and see grandma," she thought, after sauntering about through the well-known apartments for a little while. "Now that I'm likely to be with her again, and her little money will be an object to me, I must not offend her, poor old lady! I believe she cares for me more than anyone in the world does—much more than Dennis does. Phoo! he doesn't care for me at all—it was that pale-faced thing Hilda Ray he cared for, not me. Heigho! after all I did not make such a good thing of it as I fancied. Well, one comfort is that in Australia he'll never find out how I tricked him; here perhaps he might have discovered, for Gerald Ray is sure to come back sooner or later and tell Hilda, and Hilda is sure to tell Dennis, the sly, spiteful old maid! What a stiff, stupid old thing she is now!"

And Eleanor tied a fashionable hat on her dainty head and looked at herself in the glass, and then tripped off to the cottage.

"Dear me! how small and poky it looks after Stoneyvale," she sighed. "I shall feel rather queer here at first, but with some of my money I can get the house made comfortable; it's clean enough, thank goodness. Well, Mary Styles, how is Mrs. Merton?" she added, aloud, as the woman who acted as companion and nurse to Mrs. Merton entered.

"But poorly, ma'am," she replied, "and fretting to see you, poor soul. She—she's heard you're leaving Hartford, ma'am, and it's upset her."

"Like most Hartford news, that's false, Mary, I'm not leaving Hartford," replied Eleanor.

"No! Oh! indeed, ma'am, I'm glad to hear it. Your grandma, she have been taking on about it, ma'am. Please to come up and see her;" and she led the way to the old lady's bedroom.

"Eleanor, my child," said the old lady, trying to raise herself as her grand-daughter entered. "This is sad news I hear, child. You are leaving us, and I at my age can never hope to see you again."

"Not so fast, granny," replied Eleanor, lightly; "I am not leaving you. Dennis goes to Australia, I believe; I remain here with you."

"What! You will let your husband go alone! Surely he will want you to comfort him, Eleanor. Remember what a terrible trial he has just gone through, child," replied Mrs. Merton, gravely.

"I don't fancy I am much comfort to Dennis," replied Eleanor, scornfully. "He can take care of himself well enough, granny, you be sure—he doesn't want me; if he does he can send for me when he's got a home to take me to. Why, surely, grandma, you wouldn't have me, after the life I've been accustomed to lead, turn settler!"

"It would be a life of hardship, and one to which you have not been accustomed, Eleanor, I know, but your place is at your husband's side, your duty is to follow him and help him in his trouble," answered Mrs. Merton, gravely.

"But I tell you, granny, Dennis does not want me. He is perfectly willing I should stay here with you for the present. You needn't be so ready to find fault with me, especially now he has ruined me, grandma."

And she looked at the old lady reproachfully. "Ruined you, child! Well, there are two sides to that story, Eleanor; but there, I am not going to quarrel with you," she added, as she marked the cloud gathering on Eleanor's brow, and if Dennis wishes to leave you with me your old home is open to you, Eleanor, and what protection I can offer you; but a young wife is ill away from her husband, child. I would have gone through fire and water, I would have starved rather than have left my husband when I was your age, child."

"Ah, but you—but that was different, grandma. Dennis and I get on well enough, but it will break the heart of neither of us to part for a year or two. Bah! a year or two will soon pass, grandmamma, and then if needs be I can go out to Australia, though goodness knows I hate the idea of it."



"And is everything lost, dear?" inquired Mrs. Merton, taking Eleanor's hand in her wrinkled palm.

"Everything, grandma," replied Eleanor, with a sigh. "I shall be almost dependent on you again, if I come to you. I don't know what Dennis will be able to allow me. I haven't asked, and I suppose he can hardly tell me yet; perhaps nothing."

"Well, well," replied the old lady, "I am poor enough, Eleanor, but I have saved a little, and what I have is yours, you know, and when I die all will be left to you. Tell Dennis that, my dear, tell him that with my love; it may ease his mind to know that if he were to die you would be provided for. Tell him, my dear, and if—if he is in any immediate want, dear, why I could lend him a little sum I've got put away, you know."

"Thanks, grandma, I'll tell him," said Eleanor, stooping and kissing her grandmother carelessly, "and I'll tell him it's all arranged, and that I'm to come to you when he starts. Good bye now; I must go back to dinner. Oh! to think that this is almost my last day at Stoneyvale! It will be a come-down for me indeed to return to this little place. However, it's better than Australia. It's an awful shame, that bank failing, grandma, and Dennis put his money in it against my advice, you know. I don't know why we should be the only ones in the country to be ruined by it, I'm sure. It's very hard."

And Eleanor walked slowly home and sulkily told Dennis that her grandmother was willing to receive her, but making no mention of the offer of help she had desired her to make him.

"I may want the money," she thought, and held her peace.

She cared nothing for Dennis's poverty, nor troubled herself with the thoughts of what privations and hardships want of money might expose him to in a strange land. He was a man, and must bear it. Men were made to endure hardships and put up with privations, and could always manage to make their way somehow.

She was much more likely to need any little sum her grandmother might have to spare than he was, and when she got home and found poor Dennis laboriously casting up his accounts and planning and contriving how he could best make the two ends meet after paying his passage to Australia she yet kept silent on the subject of her grandmother's offer.

"I wish I had a friend who could lend me a few hundreds to make a start with," he sighed.

"We have no one, not a soul, as you very well know," she answered, shortly.

"No, you are right there," he answered, somewhat bitterly; "friends aren't as plentiful as blackberries in the time of adversity."

"If you like to ask the Corfields—" began Eleanor.

"The Corfields—mere acquaintances!" he replied, contemptuously. "Do you think I would put myself in such a position—lay myself open to be snubbed by a fellow like Jack Corfield?"

"Oh, well, beggars cannot be choosers, you know, Dennis," replied Eleanor, shrugging her shoulders. "The Corfields are my friends, so that's sufficient reason for your disliking them, I know."

"Disliking them! I don't very particularly dislike them, Eleanor, but I certainly do not feel inclined to beg favours from them," he answered, quietly.

"Well, just as you like. I don't want the money, I'm sure," she answered, carelessly. "It was for your sake I suggested it. Now there's your dear friend, Miss Ray. Why doesn't she help you?"

Dennis blushed a dark red. "She—she offered—long ago, and I refused to take a penny from her, Eleanor. How could I do it?" he said.

"You refused?" she cried, incredulously. "You refused! Well, Dennis Vanstone, you are a greater fool than even I took you for. Ha! ha!"

And she burst into one of her shrill fits of laughter, and without deigning to waste another word on him left the room.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again!

WHEN tidings of the Vanstones' misfortunes reached Hilda's ears the news filled her with grief and dismay. She could hardly realise it, hardly believe that the story told her was really true till she met Mr. Jenkins, Dennis's lawyer, and learnt that there was no mistake about it at all—that the Vanstones were ruined, and that Stoneyvale and all it contained would speedily be sold by auction.

"Then Mr. Vanstone's whole property was lost in the Garford bank?" said Hilda.

"Yes, all he had left to lose," Miss Ray, replied the lawyer. "It was a bad smash—very bad—and Vanstone was a shareholder, you know."

Hilda sighed. "Poor Dennis! How grieved I am," she said.

"And I too, Miss Ray. Well, let us hope that in Australia he will do well and retrieve his losses."

"In Australia!" cried Hilda. "I heard a rumour that he was going there, but did not quite believe it. Oh, Mr. Jenkins, is that positively necessary? Can nothing be done to avoid that?"

"Indeed, my dear lady, I think it will be the best and happiest thing for him to leave England, by far his best chance of getting on in life again. Mrs. Vanstone stays with old Mrs. Merton, I hear," rejoined the old lawyer.

"And Dennis goes alone?" asked Hilda, in unmitigated surprise.

"Yes, Vanstone goes alone," replied he, drily.

Hilda turned away, her eyes filled with tears. How could she help him? that was her one thought, and if she could manage it, would he let her? She doubted if he would accept help from her, and she was right.

Through the old lawyer, who was Hilda's man of business as well as Vanstone's, she made him an offer of help, as delicately as such an offer could be made, but it was declined, thankfully but firmly, and Hilda felt bitterly the gulf that was fixed between her and her old lover, when, even in his direst need, he could not consent to accept help from her hands.

"Ah! how willingly I would give him all—everything," she thought, "and he refuses to accept what it would cost me little or nothing to give up—but Mr. Jenkins told me it would be so, and perhaps I have been foolish to offer it. Well, we shall be quite separated now. I shall never see him again, perhaps. Poor Dennis! Poor Dennis!"

And she wept for the trouble that had come upon him, and felt that if she could serve him she would willingly lay her life and her fortune at his feet.

And so the day for the sale at Stoneyvale came at length. Carpenters and upholsterers had taken possession of the house; the rooms presented a strange aspect, every article ticketed and numbered, and the furniture arranged in stiff, unwonted fashion for the better convenience of the auctioneer—a large man with a loud voice who walked through and through the fine old rooms and over the delicate carpets in thick, muddy boots, and with his hat on his head, followed by his men, who talked over the value of the chairs and tables, and the probable price at which this, that and the other would "go," till the rooms became filled with intending buyers and the auction began in real earnest.

"Just look at these lovely curtains," whispered Mrs. Blackfield to Mrs. Garrett. "I know Mrs. Vanstone gave fifteen pounds for them, and that lucky fellow Harry Vale has got them for seven—brand new, my dear, only put up six months ago."

"Yes, indeed! What an extravagant woman she was—there! the ottoman has gone for six pounds, only fancy. Well, if the house had been mine I would have furnished it in a different style. But the things are handsome enough. Mrs. Corfield has bought the ponies. I wonder

how poor Eleanor will like to see them driven about by another? One is sorry for the Vanstones, of course, but they lived far beyond their means, you know."

And so whilst Eleanor was fretting over the loss of her pink topazes and crying for her ponies at the cottage, her former friends were picking her to pieces in her old abode and making merry over the sale of the things which had been the joy and pride of her life.

She hated everyone who bought anything at the sale, and quarrelled with Mrs. Merton for saying she ought to be thankful that there were so many buyers, instead of abusing and reviling them.

As for Dennis, he wandered far away into the woods that morning—into the woods that had been his once but were his no longer. His grief was silent and bitter; he uttered no word of complaint, but the iron had entered into his soul, and all who saw Dennis Vanstone recognised that his spirit was broken, and doubted if he would ever be his former self again.

"Tain't in the nature of a man to see his roof sold from over his head and his land from under his feet without feeling it sorely," said an honest-looking farmer to his friend. "Vanstone were a bit proud and held his head high, but he was a good fellow at heart, and I'm sorry for him."

"So am I," replied the other. "He was a good master and a kind-hearted chap enough. Can't say as much for the missus, though," and he laughed.

"The missus? Nay, she wasn't the wife for him. It was his old sweetheart, Miss Ray, up at the farm, he ought to have stuck to. I've never quite forgiven him that business," replied the farmer.

"No, it were the ruin of him," replied the other. "This one's cost him a pretty penny they say."

And then the friends followed the crowd into the dining-room, and were soon absorbed in a spirited bidding for the old oak dining-table which had stood there before the broad hearth for a hundred and fifty years or more, but which was now fated to be removed to the shop of a dealer in Cleveland Street, and sold to a nouveau riche, who was bent on furnishing his newly built country seat in the ancient style.

The sale was a successful one in the usual sense of the word. The old tapestries and cabinets fetched a good price, the hunters that Dennis had so often ridden with the Garford hounds, and which had been the admiration of the whole field many a time, sold well, and when he lay down to rest in Mrs. Merton's cottage that night a homeless, landless man, he knew that his debts at any rate were paid, and that he held the sum of two thousand pounds at his command to start with in the land whither he was going.

The day for his departure was fixed, his passage taken, and his outfit prepared. Another week would see him on the high seas, sailing away perhaps for ever from his native land, and for the last time he wandered down the familiar road that led from Hartford to Stoneyvale. For the last time! Could it really be so? Was he leaving the dear old place for ever?

And as he leant against the gate at the entrance of the chestnut avenue and looked up it, at the old home standing still and quiet and stately with the great pine trees behind it just as he had known it ever since his earliest days, he could not believe that it was his no longer. His heart swelled with sorrow and yearned over his lost home; and he gazed long and sadly at the shelter of his childhood till the sun began to sink and the rooks in the great elms cawed and chattered around their nests preparatory to settling themselves for the night amidst the thick branches.

A timid hand laid on his arm and the sound of a low, sweet voice beside him roused him from his melancholy musings. Hilda Ray stood before him.

"Dennis," she said, "I hear you leave us soon."

And then she stopped, and as she looked at his sad face tears filled her eyes.



[LOVE AND JEALOUSY.]

"The poor old home, Hilda, the poor old home," said he, pointing to it. "It breaks my heart to leave it. Yes, I am leaving soon, Hilda—the ship sails next Thursday. How come you here? I feared I might not see you again before I left."

"What! you would have left without saying good bye, Dennis?" she faltered.

His bosom heaved, and for a moment he was silent; then, as if in a sudden agony, he cried:

"Hilda, Hilda! don't you know that the thoughts of bidding adieu to you, of never seeing you again, are more bitter to me than the loss of all my worldly goods? Don't you see that you—*you* are the only thing in this wide world I love? Nay, don't turn from me, this is no time for concealment, it is the last—the very last time we shall ever be together, Hilda, and I must tell you all my heart—tell you what daily, hourly misery I have suffered since I left you three years ago, Hilda."

"Hush! hush!" she almost whispered. "It is no use speaking of it, Dennis, my poor, dear friend. I have understood you and seen your trouble. God help you, Dennis. You don't know how I have felt for you all along. Even—*even* at first, when my own misery almost killed me, the worst pang I endured was the thought of how you would some day suffer when you found out that—that—it was all wrong—all a mistake."

Dennis buried his face in his hands and groaned aloud.

"Yes, I was deceived—deceived," he murmured.

For a moment they stood silently side by side at the great gate where in happier days they had so often met and parted with a loving kiss, and then Dennis raised his head and took Hilda in his arms and kissed her brow and lips once and for the last time.

"Good bye, Hilda, my one and only love," he murmured. "Here, where I gave you the first kiss in happy, by-gone years, I give you the last we shall ever exchange. Good bye for ever."

And he drew back, whilst she turned away sobbing bitterly.

A harsh laugh broke on their ears. They started guiltily apart, and there in the roadway before them stood Eleanor, her face white with passion, and a wicked, mocking smile on her lips.

"Very touching indeed," she remarked, in a slow, bitter tone. "Why, Dennis, this beats the churchyard rendezvous. Quite romantic, upon my word. Well, you might have the decency to wait till you are rid of me before indulging in any little love passages. You will not have me to embarrass you much longer, and you can pass yourself off at the antipodes for an unmarried man if you like. But as for you, Hilda Ray, who pretend to be so much better than your neighbours, take care what you do. I'll expose you before the whole of Hartford. I'll not have you running after my husband and making love to him before my very eyes. No, I'll not be silent. Anyone, everyone may hear what I have to say," she continued, turning angrily on Dennis, who drew her attention to a group of advancing villagers. "I say Hilda Ray shall not make love to you before my eyes. You chose me for your wife when she would have been only too glad to take you—that ought to be enough to prevent a modest woman hanging about after a man as she has after you. Shame on you for a false, bad woman," and Eleanor turned on her viciously.

"Be silent!" cried Dennis, in a voice hoarse with anger and shame. "Be silent and come away. You are shaming yourself, not her, by your unwomanly violence. I loved Hilda dearly years ago, and was but saying good bye to her."

Eleanor laughed loud and bitterly.

"Kisses and tears and the rest of it. Ay, a most affectionate parting. What has she to say in excuse for such behaviour? Can't you speak, Miss Ray, or for once are you ashamed of yourself?"

"No, Mrs. Vanstone, I am not ashamed," replied Hilda, firmly. "As a sister may love a

brother so do I love Dennis, and grieve to lose him."

"Brother and sister. Bosh! do you think I am going to believe such baby nonsense as that? Are you waiting for my death to marry him, Miss Ray? If so, you'll have to wait a long time yet—I'm young and strong," she sneered.

Hilda turned pale and made a few steps in the direction of home.

"Ah! you can't gainsay me," cried Eleanor, exultingly. "Don't I know that poor as I am you would give worlds to stand in my shoes and to be his wife?—deny it if you dare."

"Would to God she were my wife!" broke out Dennis, hotly. "What a viper I took to my bosom. What a madman I was when I married you."

"Hush, hush, Dennis," said Hilda, warningly. "Let us say good bye and end this scene."

And she stretched out her hand to him once more, and in another moment was gone, Eleanor's hysterical laughter ringing in her ears as she walked quickly and with tear-filled eyes in the direction of home.

Not trusting himself to speak to or look at his wife Dennis turned away and strode hastily in the opposite direction, leaving Eleanor seated on the bank with white, quivering, angry features and a jealous, aching heart.

She did not love her husband. Nay, she rejoiced at the notion of being freed from his presence, but the idea of his loving Hilda still was as gall and wormwood to her jealous soul, and with a deadly hatred she hated the woman who possessed her husband's heart, albeit she set so light a value on it herself.

"She shall pay me for this. I will be revenged on her," she muttered, gnawing her rosy lip as she sat on the soft green bank. "All Hartford, all Hartford shall hear of this before a week is out. I hate her—ah! how I hate her and her quiet, prim, deceitful ways!"

And she rose and slowly returned to the cottage.

(To be Continued.)





[A WIFE'S DEVOTION.]

## AGAINST HIS WILL.

A NOVELETTE.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

### CHAPTER I.

A HOUSE TO LET.

EARLY in the afternoon of June the seventh, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-one, the train stopped at Creepingham Station and discharged one passenger, a trunk, and three parcels with the deliberation marked in all parliamentary trains when they pull up at quiet places.

The passenger and the trunk belonged to each other, but the three parcels were for different tradesmen in the village, being in fact so many bundles of goods from the wholesale agent in that important and slowly, it might be said very slowly, rising market town of Stopton-on-Tring.

"Goods for the women at the big house?" said the station-master to the guard.

"Most likely," he replied, "find them themselves, I suppose."

"No, Miss Netheray will pay, but it's done quietly, as he is so mean."

"Awfully mean, ain't he?" said the guard.

"The meanest—I don't know what to call him, and worse since Master Hubert went away seven years ago," replied the station-master.

"He was a nice lad, wasn't he?" asked the inquiring guard.

"As nice as his father is—nasty," replied the station-master.

The passenger who had waited patiently during this colloquy to give up his ticket was a tall, sunburnt man, with a good face, the eyes being particularly attractive. There was a bright

gleam in their blue depths that was particularly pleasing, and his mouth, but imperfectly concealed by a crisp, short moustache and beard, had a full honest look about it. His dress was of plain blue cloth, such as masters of sailing vessels affect when they come ashore.

He was in no hurry apparently, but stood quietly, with his elbows on the rails, at the back of the platform while the station-master and the guard enjoyed their accustomed chat.

After a few words with the engine-driver about his eldest boy, who was "down with the measles," the station-master cried "Right," the guard blew his whistle, and the train, after much preliminary creaking, groaning and shaking, moved on.

There were only two men kept at Creepingham Station, the master and the porter, and the latter being in the signal box the former had to take the passengers' tickets and look after the parcels.

"Nice day, sir," he said, as he took the piece of pasteboard, at the same time taking stock of the stranger. "Got a trunk, sir. You will leave it, I suppose?"

"I must," the stranger replied, "as I do not see you have any cabs here."

"You could have had a shay," said the station-master, with some pride, "if you had ordered it at Blenton's."

"And who is Blenton?"

"Bless you, sir, never heard of Blenton?"

"No."

"Why, he keeps the Netheray Arms."

The stranger smiled slightly and looked straight at the station-master, a heavy, slow sort of man, whose ideas were few and far between, and who boasted that he had the worst memory in the county—just the sort of person a parsimonious railway would appoint to a place where there is a good chance of a railway accident.

"I think I will put up at the Netheray Arms," said the stranger. "Is it far to walk?"

"Close on two miles. But Jim, my porter,

can bring your trunk up when he comes home to tea."

"Jim lives in the village then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Handy for his work at all events," muttered the stranger. Then aloud, "No, never mind. I'll get Danton—Blanton—Blenton to send down for it. There is something explosive in it, and it requires careful handling."

"Any of that dynamite in it, sir?" asked the station-master.

"Worse than that," replied the stranger.

"Then I'm danged if he mayn't lay on the platform then."

"Very good. It won't take any harm this fine day."

Nodding carelessly he strode out of the station, leaving the intelligent master in a very curious frame of mind. He was troubled by the presence of the portmanteau, and troubled by the conviction that the stranger was not an entire stranger to him.

"I knows the look and I knows the manner," he mused, "but I don't know the man. Dang 'im, who be he?"

But the problem was too much for him and he had to give it up, and the stranger, who left the station with a smiling face, soon settled down into seriousness, and walked along at a great rate towards the village, passing several lanes and other turnings very much like a man thoroughly acquainted with his road.

Creepingham—pretty, quaint, but intolerably dull—hove in sight, and as he neared it he drew a soft felt hat he wore down over his eyes and looked quickly on either side of him as he entered the one broad, irregular street of village.

Only a dog or two, a sleeping cat, and a shackled donkey, which had perversely left a rich green lane to pick up scanty nourishment on the stony road, were in sight, and unheeded by mortal he reached that comfortable and commodious inn known as the Netheray Arms.

Mine host was in the bar sleeping, a stout man on whom good living was not thrown away.

He heard a footstep, slowly opened his eyes, and stared at the stranger standing by the bar.

"Can I have a room and dinner here?"

Mr. Blenton's eyes opened a little wider on hearing the voice, and he stretched himself and yawned.

"In course you can, sir," he said, after a pause.

"Thank you. And I shall want a bed too. My portmanteau is at the station—can you send for it?"

"Yes, sir. Will you take anything to drink now?"

"Nothing, thank you. Dinner in two hours if you can manage it."

And he was gone, leaving Job Blenton just getting properly awake, but a little confused by this sudden rush of business.

"A dinner in two hours and a bed—good—Mariar!"

His wife, a buxom but very active woman, appeared and heard of the arrival of a customer, and departed to the kitchen to plunge into the delights of cooking.

The stranger, on leaving the inn, turned to the right and walked quickly to the far end of the village, and paused before a high, red-bricked wall crowned with ivy. Over it, nestling among shrubs and trees, the roof of an old-fashioned, medium-sized house could be seen.

"At last," murmured the stranger, with an exultant gleam in his eyes. "At last."

He rang the bell that hung by the entrance gate, and stood with eager ears listening for a footstep. He waited and listened in vain, no footstep came.

"All out," he muttered.

But the exultant gleam was already dying away, and vague fear was knocking at his heart.

He rang again and waited, rang once more, louder, and meeting with no response, stopped across the road.

Then he saw why it was he received no answer. Fixed upon a pole, and stowed away in a corner among the trees where it was least likely to be seen, was a board with the announcement: "This house to let," and at the sight of it he staggered and turned pale.

"Great God!" he exclaimed, "have I come so far to find this—gone—dead—or—false—which?"

He put his hands tightly on his heart, and compressed his lips to check another groan, then drew his hat down lower still, and with a weight of sudden misery upon him he returned to the inn.

Job Blenton was ready for his guest, and ushered him into a neat little parlour looking out upon the garden and bowling-green. The stranger, in moody thought, took off his hat and dropped into a chair, and Job Blenton, looking at him, suddenly became petrified with astonishment.

"Mr. Hubert!" he exclaimed, as soon as he could speak.

"Yes," said the other, bitterly, "I am here again. But you will oblige me by keeping it quiet for the present."

"Say the word, Mr. Hubert, and I'll shut the house up."

"I won't tax you so far, good Blenton, but I will ask you to sit down and have a chat with me."

"I will, sir, if you will let me open a bottle of the old Burgundy—at my expense, sir. A glass of wine will do you good. You look fatigued."

Receiving a sign of assent, Job Blenton hurried out, and soon returned with a cobwebbed bottle of really good wine, and having uncorked it, filled two glasses.

"Your good health, sir," he said, raising his glass.

"And yours, Blenton," said the other, as he drank his wine. "Ah! this has no equal under the sun. And now give me a few minutes and bear with me."

"Right gladly, Mr. Hubert."

"First tell me how long The Limes has been to let?"

"Two years and a month or so."

Hubert groaned and made a frenzied motion with his hands. Job Blenton refilled his glass and pushed it nearer to him.

"Don't be afraid of it, sir. It's a great soother," he said.

"And why—did Mrs. Harley and her daughter go away?" asked Hubert.

Job Blenton looked embarrassed, sipped his wine, coughed behind his hand, and stared out of the window, but did not find a reply.

"Why," asked Hubert again, "did Mrs. Harley and her daughter leave Creepingham?"

"Mrs. Harley didn't leave," said Job. "She's here still—"

"Why, that's rare good news—"

"Stop a minute, sir. She's here still—but where?" asked Job, solemnly.

The younger man looked keenly at the red, good-natured visage of his host, and all the colour fled from his cheeks.

"Do—do you mean to tell me," he began, "that she—"

"Yes, sir," said Job; "she's in the churchyard, and a stone marks the spot. The daughter hadn't much, so a few friends kind o' put something together, and— Well, there it is, not much to look at, but freely given."

"God bless the givers," said Hubert, fervently, "but why did Lucia—Miss Harvey go away?"

"It came about through Sir Brian thinking that he wanted The Limes," said Job Blenton, speaking with evident constraint, "and it was really too big for a lone young lady, and so, the lease being out, they had a talk about it, I suppose, and she left."

"Where did she go to?" asked Hubert.

"Heaven knows, sir," replied Job, sadly. "We've never heard a word of her since."

Hubert got up from his seat and paced up and down the room in a state of violent agitation. It was some time before he could speak with tolerable calmness.

"Blenton," he said, "I see that you have made the best of this bad story, that you have struggled to avoid saying anything to increase the bitterness between my father and me, but the naked, ghastly truth is, notwithstanding, plainly before me. He persecuted these people until the mother died, and he drove the daughter into the world, where she may starve for aught he cares."

"It all come of her and Mr. Harvey not being friends," said Job, "the lawsuit, you know, sir."

"In which Sir Brian was worsted, and justly, being in the wrong."

"And yet, though a winner, Mr. Harvey was a loser."

"That is true; it impoverished him."

"And he died broken-hearted, they say."

"There is another thing I want a word with you about," said Hubert Netheray. "I have indirectly heard that my sister is going to be married. To whom is she engaged?"

"To Mr. Carden, of Moor Park."

"Old enough to be her father," muttered Hubert.

"Well, good Blenton, you must put my dinner back an hour. I am going to the Hall."

"Don't do that, sir, unless you go to make peace."

"I go neither to make peace nor to break it; simply to ask a few questions."

"Don't you think I could answer them?"

"I don't; and now I will go. The path from behind here is still open?"

"No, sir, it was closed by Sir Brian the year you went away. I hope, sir, you have been fortunate abroad."

"I do not complain. I bring back with me just ten thousand pounds, and that will start me in business."

"You in business, sir?" exclaimed Job.

"You, sir, heir to the Netheray estate?"

"Why not?" said Hubert. "I had to work abroad, beginning with the toil of a common labourer. I do not see why I should be idle at home; but before I settle down Miss Harvey must be found."

He nodded kindly to Job, who, without avail, pressed him to have another glass of wine, and

as the bye-path was closed wended his way towards Netheray Hall by the high-road.

## CHAPTER II.

### AN UNWELCOME PRODIGAL.

SIR BRIAN NETHERAY had always been a passionate man, but in his old days he began to get unbearable. Even the old family servants lost that equanimity of temper so desirable in a dependent, rebelled against him, so that nearly all had left either by their own desire or his stern request. The few that remained made no secret of their doing so on account of Miss Grace.

"Who is so unhappy," everybody said.

Grace was unhappy, and had always been so since her brother left. There was some ten years between them, and she was but a child when Hubert and his father quarrelled about the former's love for Lucia Harvey, the quarrel ending in the son's dismissal from home while his father lived.

But she loved her brother dearly and his image had not faded from her heart during all the years that he had been away. She was thinking of him on the day that he came home, was thinking of him as he was smiling towards Netheray Hall.

"Shall I ever see dear Hubert again?" was her frequent thought, and hope was sometimes with her.

It was by her side when walking in the avenue of trees that led from the lodge to the Hall she saw a stranger approaching.

But the keen eye of affection left neither long in doubt, and they were folded in each other's arms.

"Oh! Hubert, my brother."

"My darling Grace."

And then when they had got over the first warmth of their meeting after so many years' absence from each other they sat down upon the roots of an old oak tree and talked of momentous things, Hubert yielding his own to hers.

"How comes it that you are to marry Carden?" he asked.

"Sir Brian chose him," Grace answered.

"But why?"

A deep roseate colour overspread the girl's face and she turned her head a little aside. Hubert read half her story already and smiled bitterly.

"You love another?" he said.

"Yes," was the answer, in a soft, zephyr-like whisper.

"Who is he?"

"George Beardon."

"My old school-fellow," said Hubert, "which accounts for Sir Brian's opposition."

"He offended Sir Brian very deeply," said Grace.

"How?"

"He helped the Harveys in many ways."

"Then Heaven bless him for it," cried Hubert. "But perhaps it was wrong. He ought to have thought more of you."

"He did it in secret," said Grace, "and was betrayed."

"And did no good, I fear," said Hubert, gloomily, "seeing that Mrs. Harvey is dead, and Lucia gone nobody knows whither."

But here Grace looked up with a bright smile and told him news that set his heart a thumping and caused him to embrace her with the fervour of love and gratitude.

"Lucia is in London," she said. "I sometimes hear from her. She sends her letters under cover to Mary Lee."

"My old nurse," said Hubert. "Blessings on the old woman. What a thing it is to have a friend, be it ever so humble."

"If I had known where to write," said Grace, timidly, "I could have sent some of the letters on to you."

"Which might not have reached me," said Hubert. "I have been living where the post seldom comes, and comes when it pleases, drunk or sober according to its whim. My life was



uncertain in such a savage land, and I waited until I should come home."

"Was that wise, Hubert?"

"I knew that Lucia would be true until the end of her days, for had we not sworn to be so?"

"And true she is," said Grace, "her letters with you, and she writes too little of herself. She never says that she needs anything, and yet I sometimes fear she is struggling with want in London. She went there thinking she could sell those beautiful paintings of fruit and flowers. You remember how well she painted?"

"Yes, Grace, but I have doubts if there is bread to be made by them. But it is enough. You have her letters? You know where I can find her? Be here again in an hour with those precious communications."

"And you, dear Hubert?"

"I am going to Sir Brian?"

"Do not, I beg of you," implored Grace; "day by day he has grown more violent. He will quarrel with you. He may—"

"Fear not, Grace," said Hubert, "I know how to muzzle the lion. He will not harm me. Be here again in an hour."

He gave her a kiss and hurried off, leaving her in doubt and trembling. For himself he had no fear, and went straight to the Hall.

The door was open, no servant was near, and he entered straightway as he used to do when it was his home, across the hall, up the staircase to the room Sir Brian usually occupied.

The baronet had a giant frame, and sickness was a thing unknown to him, but he seldom stirred from home. A naturally morbid disposition had been fed upon and cultivated by brooding until he brought himself to hate all cheerful life around him. He hated to see the young, despised their mirth, and would have done without the very sunshine if he could. A self-tormenting, miserable, lonely, despised old man.

He was lounging on a couch with his giant frame extended and a huge cheroot between his lips when Hubert with quick footsteps entered the room. The door was immediately behind him and he could not see who it was without turning. It was against his nature to turn, but asked in a snappish manner:

"Who is there?"

Hubert advanced and stood facing him. For one moment only the baronet was in doubt and then sullen fires flickered in his eyes. But he did not change his position.

"You, of all others," he said, "least expected and least welcome."

"I am not surprised to hear you say so," replied Hubert, "for how could I expect that time or anything else could soften that heart of yours?"

"I have no heart to soften," the baronet replied.

"A sad confession to make."

"A true one nevertheless. Now tell me why you are here. To tell me you are sorry for the past?"

"No."

"Then why come at all?"

"To demand of you a word of regret for your cruelty to a widow and her daughter."

"Fahaw!" said Sir Brian, coolly, puffing out a cloud of smoke, "what next? You have come upon a fool's errand. Is that all?"

"All I purposed at first, but another has arisen. I have seen Grace."

"Ah! and she has been listening to a tirade against me?"

"Not so. She has told me she is about to be married."

"That is true," said Sir Brian, with a cold, hard smile, "and it is satisfactory for me to have one obedient child."

"And does such obedience give you joy?" demanded Hubert. "Have you thought of her life after she becomes the wife of Carden—known as Brutal Carden since he became a man—or beast in the form of one?"

"Don't forget that I am your father and that he is my friend," said the baronet.

"I will forget nothing," said Hubert, "but I cannot mince my words. You call that man

your friend? Do you really think you have such a thing as a friend in the wide world?"

The baronet winced under this home thrust, but he only grew more dogged and smoked on defiantly.

"Oh, father!" cried Hubert, suddenly, kneeling before him, "have you no mercy? Are you dead to all pity? Why are you so cruel to your children? Go back—it is not difficult for you to do so—to the time when we were babes, when you had some joy in us. I can remember but dimly, it is true, but still remember you nursing me—"

"You were not an ingrate then."

"No, nor now; but I cannot change my heart; I cannot kill my love. A word of approval from you would have made me happy years ago—would make me happy now. I have no need to be a suppliant in other ways—"

"Stop!" cried Sir Brian. "You need not go any further. You presume upon the estate being entailed? So it is; but you shall not profit much by it. In your time it will be worth little. Men come to me to say that this or that must be done here and there, or this and that will go to ruin; I answer them, 'Let it go until the ingrate inherits it.' I raise the rents; I drive the best yeomen away; I take in scamps who spoil the land, all for your sake—all for your sake!"

"This is madness."

"With a method in it—but go; you kneel to me in vain. I will never give you the word you ask."

"And Grace?" asked Hubert, rising.

"She marries Carden this day week. All is prepared; but we shall have few wedding guests. You may come if you think fit."

"I'd as leave attend her funeral," said Hubert.

"Each hour sees you more bitterly cruel."

With a proud step and head erect Hubert left the room, followed by a burst of mocking laughter from his father's lips, the most awful sound he had ever heard.

"There is no turning him," he muttered; "so the armour of warfare must be girded on. By Heaven! Brute Carden shall not marry Grace!"

### CHAPTER III.

#### YOUNG LOCHINVAR.

On rejoining Grace, Hubert had a long interview with her, which ere long proved to be a fearful one, but as the substance of it will appear in future events it is unnecessary to record the matter of it here. When it was over Hubert returned to the Netheray Arms, where dinner was awaiting him.

But first he wanted a swift and trustworthy messenger to ride over to the White House, where George Reardon, the best-looking and one of the richest bachelors in the county, resided.

A stable-boy, who dearly loved to risk his neck on horseback, was entrusted with the business, and galloped off on a half-broken colt without a saddle, and a halter in lieu of a bridle.

So well did the boy do his work that as Hubert had finished his first after-dinner cigar George Reardon appeared on a strong roan, bearing upon it the signs of having been ridden rather recklessly.

He gave the reins to Job Blenton, who with unwonted activity rushed out to meet him, and hurried to the dining-room.

The meeting between the old schoolfellows was a warm one, and George, having had a glass of wine and lit a cigar, Hubert went into the business he had in his heart.

"You are really fond of Grace?" he said.

"My dear fellow," said George, "I do not love myself half so well."

"I believe you. As a boy, George, you never lied, and there is truth in your looks. Loving her so why did you let that fellow Carden come in?"

"I did my best," said George, with an air of despair, "but Grace would not listen to me. Duty to her father had laid hold of her too

tight, and she was shut up away from me. The grounds of Netheray Hall have been watched and the very keeper and watchers had orders to dog my footsteps. It was next door to impossible for me to get the briefest of interviews with her."

"Well, I have changed all that," said Hubert, "and Grace will come out and see you at nine o'clock to-night."

"To-night!" cried George, springing up. "What splendid news! You will excuse me if I go at once—"

"No, indeed I won't!" said Hubert, laughing, "for it is not yet seven o'clock."

"But, my dear fellow—"

"It is no use; I understand your impatience and respect it; but you don't leave here until eight, when I will let you go. I have a lot to say to you, and until that hour I shall not let you into the secret of the appointed spot."

So George was obliged to remain, and he sat down on thorns until the conversation between them turned to a most interesting point, and he became absorbed until close upon the hour Hubert specified.

At parting he wrung the hand of his friend with rather painful warmth.

"Hubert, my best of friends," he said, "how shall I ever repay you?"

"By doing as you are told," replied Hubert, "and not allowing your impetuosity to mar my plans."

"I have been so long under restraint," the other pleaded, and then they parted for the night.

In the morning Hubert, with a certain person's address in his pocket, departed for town, and arriving there took a cab and bade the man drive to Johanna Street, Somers Town. The cabman knew Somers Town, but not Johanna Street; he undertook, however, to make inquiries.

After some trouble Johanna Street was found, and Hubert Netheray found it what is called "respectable but poor;" a street filled with the needy toilers, mostly women, and in the most squalid house of all he heard that a Miss Harvey lived there, "on the top floor back," but she was out at the time.

He dismissed the cab and waited hour after hour until evening was approaching. Then a pale, pretty girl with a hopeless look in her face came in with tottering steps to find herself folded in a pair of strong arms.

"Hush, my darling! do not cry out or tremble so. It is I, Hubert, come back to claim you."

Picture her joy, if you can; no words can express it—this girl, delicately reared, cast upon the hard world, and after much struggling found herself unable to cope with the difficulties that bristle in the way of her gaining bread. Little by little she had come down, until that night she came "home" to that poor place, hungry and penniless, to find joy.

Great joy is this—this strong, sunburnt lover of hers, who took her away and lodged her in a good house for two short, happy days, and then wedded her.

"And where shall we spend our honeymoon?" he asked her, as they left the church.

"Oh, anywhere with you, dear."

"Then let it be at Creepingham. I have something to do there which I will tell you by and bye."

She made no demur, although going down to Creepingham would perforce bring up some sad recollections, but what would be a little sadness to so much joy?

So they went down, and Job Blenton and his wife were driven into a state of bewildering ecstacy at having two such guests. And the villagers would have made a demonstration, but Hubert forbade it.

"Not now," he said, "but anon."

Then he wrote two letters and sent them by hand. One to his father, the other to George Reardon. Here is that which he sent to the Hall.

"MY DEAR FATHER,—Having your invitation to attend at the Hall on the day set apart for Grace's wedding I shall avail myself of it. But I have a favour to ask. May I bring my wife? Your affectionate son, HUBERT."

To this there was the simple answer:

"Surr yourself. I do not desire to be consulted in anything."

In reply to the second letter George Reardon himself appeared and dined with this newly-wedded pair, and afterward they all put their heads together whispering.

What they held in their minds required a deal of working out, for there was a lot of reference to papers that Hubert had brought with him from town, papers that George eventually took away with him, and elaborate and careful instructions given to him by Hubert.

Afterwards they all went to see old Mary Lee, who wept and cried over Hubert as if he had been her own son, and then again they had another consultation.

"Leave it to me, my dears," said the old woman, at parting, "and everything shall be right."

"You cannot do better," said Hubert to George; "she has a clear head, a good heart, and is faithful, I believe, to death."

"Death," said the old woman, "why should I fear it now? I am eighty-four and he must be pretty nigh me. I don't fear that, be sure of it."

And they parted from her hopeful—Hubert elated, Lucia sympathetic, and George agitated.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE APPOINTED DAY.

MR. IRA CARDEN, of Moor Park, had not unjustly become possessed of the title of "Brute," for the manhood within him was of the coarsest nature, and bordering on that of the lower animals of creation.

He was "a gentleman" in position. His name was a good one, and he belonged to the oldest Cardens, and strange to say was born of gentle parents, but from his childhood he showed those traits of character which eventually gained him his most unenviable name.

He was not cold, for in the seeking of his own gratification he might have been a warm, impulsive man. But his warmth was all for self, and his impulses tending in the worst direction.

On his estate he was both hated and feared, hated by the men and feared by the women. Those who had daughters kept them as far as possible from "Brute Carden," who, strange to say, had the power of winning the mind and heart of a simple maid, even after his hair was grey, and those he smiled upon lived to rue the day.

Once he had been shot at, and twice his house had been set on fire. But the shot missed, and the fires were put out. He made no attempt to discover the author of these crimes, but furious lovers and angry fathers were charged with it, not without good reason.

Fear was a thing he professed not to know, and he carried out his boast. There was no attempt to avoid danger. He would walk home from Stopton-on-Tring, a good twelve miles, with no other weapon than a walking-cane, and wander about the village at all times and seasons.

"He knows he is fire-proof," said one man, bitterly, "having sold himself to the devil. But his time is nearly up."

This idea took root and found general belief. "Brute Carden" had sold himself, and there was nothing to do but to let him go his evil way until his master called him.

And this was the man that Sir Brian Netheray had chosen for his daughter. People said that ill-temper had driven him mad or he would never have done it, and a few declared that as soon as the thing was settled he repented of it.

If he did his repentance was invisible to mortal eye, for he hurried the marriage on, anxious probably to get it over, as people sometimes are when they are fixed upon doing some deed, and nobody demurred to him.

On the day before the wedding he sat with Grace at dinner and talked more freely with her

than he was wont. He was surprised to find her composed and even cheerful.

"I am glad to find you have ceased to weep over my choice," he said to her.

"I am not even thinking of it," she answered, simply.

"Carden will make a good husband—one who will assert his authority, which every husband ought to do."

To this Grace said nothing, and again he was uneasy. After all, there is no man utterly callous, and this sullen man was in his way fond of his child.

He had no great love for Carden, nor for anyone in fact, but had simply chosen him because he was the very antipodes of George Reardon, whom he hated.

To make George smart and suffer was his chief object. When first he promoted the marriage he scarcely thought of Grace.

"Girls soon get reconciled to any husband," he thought.

But his mind reverted to his own wife, who had never got reconciled to him, but had borne him two children and pined away. It took ten years to kill her, but he had done it, as it was sometimes whispered to him by conscience in the watches of the night.

Old Mary Lee had come up to attend upon Grace, and was to remain with her until the time for the ceremony, the ordinary maid being dismissed for awhile and sent home for a holiday, mightily glad to get away from the gloomy place.

"I go as gladly," she told the footman, who adored her, "as I would from seeing my pretty mistress murdered."

Grace, as soon as she could, asked leave to retire, and before going she stooped down and kissed her father. He had ever avoided such demonstrations of affection, but the touch of her soft lips had a magnetic influence upon him. He looked up with a start, and a deep blush suffused his face.

"Do you thank me for bringing about this marriage?" he asked.

"I thank you for many things," she replied, "and I hope you will always love me."

"You are an odd girl," he said, giving her a gentle push. "Now get to bed and sleep so that you may have roses on the morrow. It is to be a quiet wedding, but I want you to look well, as there are sure to be some people about, and I do not want it to be said that I forced you into this union."

"I do not think they will ever say that," said Grace, quietly.

The door closed upon her, and the hard, bitter man sat ruminating, drinking more deeply than usual, and smoking those big cigars that would have tried any man not possessed of iron nerves. Thoughts of a novel nature were crowding upon him.

After to-morrow he would be alone. He had never thought of that before. He would be to all intents and purposes a childless man.

There would be nobody left to harry and worry, for he had a rebellious house of domestics, and he never left the house. What sort of life would it be?

When this thought came he filled and drank his glasses of wine in rapid succession. It required a little drowning.

He was getting old too, verging on sixty, and if indeed he lived to eighty three-fourths of his life was gone. He must die like the rest of the world, and after death—

Well! that thought must be drowned too, and he drank more wine. The bottom of the decanter was nearly reached and it was time he went to bed, where he generally lay smoking and reading for an hour or two, and occasionally drinking.

More wine was by his bedside, and he continued drinking. Sleep would not come, and he smoked, hoping to produce a torpor, but the more he smoked and drank the more wide awake he was, until dawn was at hand, when he fell into a heavy sleep.

Nobody aroused him until ten o'clock, when his valet made respectful inquiries at the door to know if he would have breakfast served in

his room. Sir Brian bade him go to the den, but the moment after remembered what morning it was and sprang out of bed.

"What is the time?" he asked.

"A quarter past ten, Sir Brian," the valet replied.

"And you could not call me before?"

"Sir Brian, it is your standing order not to be disturbed."

"Go, bring me a cup of coffee," the baronet growled.

And the man, only too glad to get out of his presence, hurried away.

At eleven o'clock Sir Brian went downstairs ready dressed for the ceremony. He made inquiries for Grace, and was told that she had not appeared.

"Mary Lee came down for her breakfast, but Miss Grace had not been seen."

"Tell her that it is close upon the time for starting," said the baronet, looking at his watch. "It will take ten minutes to walk to the church, and," he added to himself, "the earlier it is over the better. I am getting bored with it."

More than bored with it, Sir Brian, a little ashamed of it, and that long slumbering conscience just stretching its arms and yawning in your breast. It will be fully awake anon.

A quarter past eleven and a carriage from the Netheray Arms comes rattling up. Hubert descends and hands out a pretty creature with cheeks of delicate rose and white. A little happiness has driven the pallor of woe from her face, and Lucia is as beautiful as ever. Sir Brian surveys them from the window, and when they are announced stands stiffly.

Of Hubert he takes no notice, but he bows to Lucia, for, morbid, unhappy man as he is, he cannot quite forget his good breeding.

"Grace is late," said Sir Brian, addressing nobody in particular. "I had better send for her again."

The valet is summoned and entrusted with a commission to Grace. He goes up with it, and returns with the information that he can get no answer, although he has knocked loudly.

"No answer!" ejaculates Sir Brian, looking around him with a frown. "What is the meaning of it?"

Lucia turns away, but Hubert stands unmoved. Sir Brian rushes from the room, leaps up the stairs with the activity of a younger man, and knocks peremptorily at the door.

"Grace, Grace; do you hear me?"

No answer comes, and in a fury he puts his shoulder to the door and bursts it in.

No Grace is there, but Mary Lee sits like a woman of wood or stone.

"Where is Miss Grace?" he demands of her.

"Far enough away by this time," the old woman replied, "and she told me to leave too. But I've stopped behind to tell you my mind, Sir Brian. You are not a father—you are a monster."

"You are a beggarly woman," hissed the baronet.

"I am a woman, but no beggar to you or anybody," she says, "and I'm thankful to say I am not like some. I have had a half-score children, and ne'er a one but loves me. You have but two, and how much of their hearts have you a right to?"

"Where is my daughter?" demands Sir Brian, seizing her by the arm.

"Gone!"

"Gone where?"

"That I won't say, Sir Brian, if you tear me piecemeal. She's out of your reach, that's a comfort, for by this time she is the wife of Mr. George Reardon."

Then, with a bitter oath, he sends the old woman reeling and staggering into a corner, where she lies for awhile breathless, but defiant, and dashing downstairs, confronts his son.

"Do you know anything of this elopement?" he asks.

"Everything," Hubert replies. "I arranged it—to save Grace and you."

"You bound!" cries Sir Brian, and raises his hand to strike him, but Lucia intervenes herself and his arm falls.

"I will not tempt you so far to forget your-



self," Hubert says, "but leave. I shall not return here again until you send for me."

Sir Brian says nothing, for rage, strangely mingled with a feeling of relief, masters him, and Hubert goes his way with his pretty wife.

"I thought I would see what effect, darling, it had upon him," he says, as he hands her into the carriage, "and it has made me hopeful. We may yet be reconciled. His hard nature is softening a little."

They were back at the inn by twelve o'clock, where they found a telegram from London awaiting them. All was well. George Reardon and Grace were married.

"They left here by the first train," said Hubert, "reached town at a quarter-past ten, and at twelve we have tidings here that they are married. Truly this is a wonderful age. I'll ring for a bottle of that good Burgundy to drink them long life and happiness."

## CHAPTER V.

### NEMESIS.

LEFT alone, Sir Brian settled down to his favourite cheroots and brandy and water, forgetful or indifferent of the bridegroom, who had gone straight to the church with a cynical friend of his, one Captain Mowbray, for best man.

They were in good time, as became them, but found that the villagers were there in force before them. The church was fairly filled with the women and children, and the men had congregated thickly outside.

"And yet Netheray said it would be a quiet affair," remarked Ira Carden.

"A little joke of his," replied Captain Mowbray.

"He is not given to joking. But confound it, there is some joke on. Look at the beggars grinning."

And indeed it was so. Half the yokels, male and female, had expansive and expanding features, and barely suppressed chuckles were heard in the sacred aisle as the bridegroom and his supporter walked to the altar. But Brute Carden did not care much for chuckles alone; he proposed to treat the people with contempt, and yet it was hard to stand there with a church full of grinning people staring at you.

"Time is getting on," said Captain Mowbray, peeping at his watch; "the fair bride is in no hurry."

"She will keep our next appointment more punctually," Carden growls.

The clergyman waiting in the vestry now sent a message that there was barely time to perform the ceremony, and the clerk was sent to see if he could get a glimpse of the coming bride.

The old man went to the gate and looked down the long road, while the yokels in the churchyard roared with delight.

There was some capering, and the place was getting like a fair.

"There is more in this than meets the eye," said Captain Mowbray. "If I were you I should jerk up the whole business and walk home."

"I will wait a few minutes longer," Carden replied.

But ere the few minutes were up the clergyman sent word that there was no time to perform the ceremony, and the marriage would not take place that day. Then with a black, black face Brute Carden strode down the aisle out of the church.

Outside he was received with a shout of laughter, and the yokels began to gather around him. Captain Mowbray, who knew something of rustics and thought he saw mischief in their eyes, hurriedly whispered:

"Out of it, quick. We are sold in some way."

They quickened their steps and did their best to make a dignified retreat of it, but a clod of earth striking Brute Carden in the back they both broke into a run.

The countrymen came on in the pursuit, but the two lightly-shod men reached the

carriage, plunged in, shut the door, and the coachman, seeing danger, whipped his horses on. As the carriage rattled off a shower of stones fell upon it thick as hail.

"What am I to think of this?" asked Carden, with a face of ashen hue.

"A practical joke of Netheray's, I say," replied Captain Mowbray.

"If it is I'll have his life for it."

"Anyhow, there is some game going on we don't understand. I should go to the Hall and demand an explanation."

"Good! I'll do it."

The order was given, and the carriage dashed on to Netheray Hall, where they found all quiet, and Sir Brian on the terrace enjoying his wine and cigars.

"See," said Captain Mowbray, "it is a jest."

With a brow dark as night Ira Carden strode up to Sir Brian, and confronting him, harshly demanded:

"What he meant by playing such a fool's trick upon him?"

Sir Brian was not one to brook being spoken to in that fashion, and stared at him with cool contempt.

"I have no explanation to offer a man who speaks in that way," he said.

"But by — I will have one!" cried Carden.

"WILL," said Sir Brian, "that is a word I keep for myself. WILL, indeed! What next, man? Go home with you."

"I demand an explanation."

"You won't get it."

"Will you give me one—for the last time?"

"No."

Then a hand was raised and Sir Brian was struck. He rose up pale to the lips.

"You know the consequence of this?" he said.

"Well?" replied Brute Carden.

"When shall we meet?"

"To-morrow."

"Where?"

"Where you please."

"Let it be by the brook bridge in my wood yonder," said Sir Brian. "Captain Mowbray, do you think you could find a friend to act for me? I would not care to invite anybody here."

"I think I can manage that," the captain said.

"Be so good then—settle all preliminaries, and meet me at the bridge at dawn to-morrow morning."

"We will not fail," said Captain Mowbray, as he and his principal turned away.

Firmly imbued with the belief that he had been the victim of an unseemly jest, Brute Carden went home with his worst passions boiling and bubbling within him, and yet half a dozen words could have put matters right.

Sir Brian knew nothing of the crowd at the church, gathered there by the rumour that Grace had fled with her lover, a rumour started by a daughter of Mary Lee's. The rumour being soon confirmed, the sympathetic poor took great delight in the confusion of the bridegroom, who was far from being popular, as we have seen, and so led up to this end—to the meeting by the brook at early dawn.

"He was always a mad fool," said Carden, "but I will kill him for this."

All that evening and far into the night he kept steadily at pistol practice, recalling an art in which he had once excelled, Captain Mowbray and a friend, who had been found to act with Sir Brian, looking on.

"If you keep your nerves to-morrow morning," said the captain, "Sir Brian may make his will."

"My nerves will not fail," replied Carden.

None of them went to bed, but sat smoking and drinking until dawn was near. Then, in a dog-cart ready prepared, they were whirled rapidly towards their destination.

The light was still dim, but Sir Brian was already there, pacing quietly up and down,

smoking one of those big cheroots and looking as composed as a man taking an ordinary morning stroll.

He was introduced to his second, with whom he shook hands, and the ground was measured out.

"Have you any objection to our pistols?" Captain Mowbray asked.

"None," was the answer. "I am content to leave all things to you."

And now the two men stand facing each other, one cool and indifferent, the other fierce and determined, with a tigerish look in his eyes. Captain Mowbray stands at the side with a white handkerchief in his hand.

"When I drop this, gentlemen, you are to fire."

They signify their assent and he raises his hand.

"Are you ready, gentlemen?"

A moment's pause and the handkerchief falls. Two pistols were fired as one, and Sir Brian staggers forward a pace or two and falls heavily down. The seconds are kneeling by his side in a moment.

"Is he dead?" asks Brute Carden.

"Not dead, but dying," Captain Mowbray replies. "There is no hope for him. Netheray, we must leave you for our own safety, but I'll send a doctor on to you. Good bye, old fellow; I am sorry for this."

Sir Brian says something in a voice they cannot understand, and they hurry away, leaving him weltering on the green sward with the sunlight stealing up through the trees and all glad nature hailing the birth of another day.

Sir Brian did not die alone. He lived long enough to be found and carried to the Hall, from whence he sent a message to his son Hubert; he lived long enough to see Grace, and died repentant of his mistaken life.

He had not lived long enough to ruin the estate, and Hubert inherited a goodly property. Yeomen returned to their farms, and a good landlord and good tenants combine to make the village of Creepingham a veritable Happy Land.

Among the happiest and proudest there is old Mary Lee, hale and hearty, and "passing rich with fifty pounds a year" pension for her good services.

Brute Carden, to the good relief of everybody, hides away abroad, and must continue to hide unless he wishes to become acquainted with a prison, for to shoot a man now-a-days in a duel is rightfully judged an act of wilful murder.

## OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS.

**THE LIMERICK BELLS.**—The remarkably fine bells of Limerick Cathedral were originally brought from Italy. They had been manufactured by a young native, who devoted himself enthusiastically to the work, and who, after the toil of many years, succeeded in finishing a splendid peal, which answered all the critical requirements of his own musical ear. Upon these bells the artist greatly prided himself, and they were at length bought by the prior of a neighbouring convent at a very liberal price. With the proceeds of this sale the young Italian purchased a little villa, where in the stillness of the evening he could enjoy the sound of his own melodious bells from the convent cliff. Here he grew old in the bosom of his family, and of domestic happiness. At length, in one of those feuds common to the period, the Italian became a sufferer amongst many others. He lost his all, and, after the passing of the storm, he found himself preserved alone amid the wreck of fortune, friends, family, and home. The bells too, his favourite bells, were carried off from the convent, and finally removed to Ireland. For a

time their artificer became a wanderer over Europe, and at last, in the hope of soothing his troubled spirit, he formed the resolution of seeking the land to which those treasures of his memory had been conveyed. He sailed for Ireland, and proceeding up the Shannon on a beautiful vessel, which reminded him of his native Italy, his own bells from the tower of Limerick Cathedral suddenly struck upon his ear. Home and all its loving ties, happiness, early recollections, all—all were in the sound, and went to his heart. His face was turned toward the cathedral in an attitude of listening, but when the vessel landed he was found to be a corpse.

**THE FIRST PAVING IN LONDON.**—In the year 1417, Henry the Fifth, observing that Holbourne, Alta via regia in Holbourne, was a deep and perilous road, ordered two ships to be laden with stones at his own cost, each twenty tons in burden, in order to repair it. This appears to be the first paving in London we have recorded.

**THE MISERICORDIANS.**—"The gaiety of Florence," we gather from a writer of twenty years ago, "after dark is invaded by gloomy sights, such as the traveller, if he comes upon them suddenly, is likely to view with a peculiar sense of sadness and perhaps of mystery. It is the time for funerals, and ever and anon a hoarse strain from the misericordians wakes up the echoes of the streets, while their huge torches cast a sickening glare over wall and casement, revealing at the same time the hideous costume of these valuable agents of mercy. Few of the inhabitants can enter dreamland without ghastly reminiscences of the passage of silent sleepers to the yawning vault outside the walls. The pace at which they are carried is more like that of the desperate Bersaglieri, of Turin, than the solemn cavalcade amongst us which conveys the lifeless burden away from its home of the past to its long one of the future."

**THE DIAMONDS OF A MARQUIS OF WESTMINSTER.**—The insignia of this nobleman were far more splendid than those of any other Knight of the Garter. The jewels that he wore at Court on "collar days" and other grand occasions were of enormous value. Some idea of the value of the entire set may be formed when we state that one of the diamonds which Lord Westminster was accustomed to wear on the pomel of the sword which he used on state occasions cost him no less than £30,000.

**ST. JAMES'S PARK.**—This is the oldest of the metropolitan parks. It appears to have been a piece of waste, marshy ground till the reign of Henry VIII. It was partly drained and enclosed by him. He built a gateway in 1532 at the north end of King Street and corner of Downing Street, over which he had a passage from Whitehall Palace into the park. The park was much improved in the reign of Charles II., and it has been since that time a favourite resort, but it did not assume its present picturesque till 1828, when Mr. Nash, the designer of Regent's Park, converted it from almost a swampy meadow into a luxuriant garden.

**ICE STATUARY.**—During the excessive cold of the year 1740, a German, named Von Meinert, carved a large lion at the gate of Holstein, in Lubeck, seven feet in length, and he did it so well, says an old author, "that a skilful carver could hardly have done better in wood." The lion was surrounded by a bulwark of ice on which were placed five cannons, a soldier and a watch box, all of ice.

**FIRST USE OF SEALING WAX.**—The first letter in Europe known to have been sealed with wax was dated from London, August 3, 1554, addressed to the Rheingrave, Philip Francis von Daun, from his agent in England, Gerhard Hermann. The wax employed in sealing this letter is of a dark, red colour, very shining, and the impress bears the initials of the writer—G. H.

**THE DRUNKARD'S CLOAK.**—In the time of the Commonwealth, the magistrates of Newcastle-upon-Tyne punished drunkards by making them carry a tub, called "the drunkard's cloak." This tub was worn bottom upwards, there being a hole at the bottom for the head, and two smaller holes at the sides for the hands to pass

through; and thus ridiculously attired, the delinquent was made to walk through the streets of the town, for as long a time as the magistrate thought proper to order, according to the grossness of the offence.

**WHITSUNTIDE WAKE.**—The following is a copy of a paper sent, in 1836, to the crier of the city of Gloucester to announce the annual Whitsuntide sports at Cooper's Hill, near Gloucester:—"Coopers hill week to commence on Wits Monday Per Sisly [precisely] at 3 o'clock. 2 Cheses to be ron for; 1 Plom Cake to be green [grinned] for; 1 do. to be Jompt in the Bag for; Horings [herrings] to be Dipt in the toober; Set of ribons to be Donsed [danced] for; Shimey to be ron for; Belt to be rosied [wrestled] for; a Bladder of Snuff to be chatred for by hold Wiming [old women]."

**POISONOUS BUGS OF MIANA.**—Sir John Maundeville, an English traveller or travel writer, who wrote in the fourteenth century, mentions a city lying in the way from Tabriz towards the east, "where no Christene man may long dwelle, no endure with lyfe in that cytee, but dyen within short tyme, and no man knowethe the cause." There is little doubt that the venomous knight alluded to the town of Miana, which lies in the direction he mentions, and is infested by that small but terrible pest whose bite is death.

**NORTHUMBRIAN CUSTOM.**—As late as the year 1701, the police of Tynedale and Reedsdale was maintained by officers who for a certain sum insured their own districts against theft and robbery, and in case of offences being committed made good the loss.

**ORIGIN OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF MUSICIANS.**—Near the beginning of the last century, an eminent German oboist, named Kaitch, came to England, where his performance was for a long time in great request; but, being of improvident habits, he died in great poverty, leaving his family destitute. Soon after, Festing, the famous violinist of that day, with Weidemann, the flute player, and Vincent, the oboist, happened to observe two interesting little boys, who had an appearance above their condition, driving milch asses down the Haymarket, and found on inquiry that they were the orphan sons of poor Kaitch. Struck with pity for the children of their brother professor, these musicians instantly raised a subscription for their relief, and it was to the consideration suggested by this circumstance of the necessity of establishing a fund for the benefit of the families of indigent musicians, that the profession owes the existence of the "Royal Society of Musicians," which excellent and most useful institution was founded in the year 1738.

## LINK BY LINK.

BY  
A POPULAR AUTHOR.

### CHAPTER XLIV.

There is no flock, however watched and tended,  
But one dead lamb is there;  
There is no fire, howe'er defended,  
But hath one vacant chair.

INTO that spacious and luxuriously furnished apartment which looks upon the geometrical flower-beds a sombre group of mourners files silently. They have just returned from following the remains of the late baronet to the tomb, and the purpose of their assembling is to hear the reading of the will.

Conspicuous in one corner are Lady Knollys, Moses Sharp, and he whom most of the people present regard as the heir, for Messrs. Griffiths and Holt, disgusted with the curtness and discourtesy of the note of dismissal, have simply ignored it, and the particulars of various interviews they have held with Colin Cathcart have not publicly transpired.

Chandos has taken the roomy chair which his

father was wont to occupy, but whether as a kind of symbolical mounting of the throne or whether in sheer thoughtlessness would be hard to say.

The action has communicated an unpleasant shock to all who have been accustomed to see that place occupied by the late baronet's poorly form. It savours to some of them of indecent callousness thus carelessly to appropriate the "vacant chair."

Enthroned as he is he looks ill at ease, and whispers frequently to Moses Sharp. My lady also wears her most frigid aspect of haughty displeasure.

One has not far to look for the cause of their mental perturbation. It is not that the slightest misgiving concerning the succession to title and estates has crossed the mind of either mother or son, but merely that as Mr. Griffiths, with a preliminary abem, produced some documents of formidable appearance, a strange young woman, dressed in the garb of deepest woe, and wearing a thick crape veil which completely hides her features, entered and quietly took her seat with the rest.

Her face is invisible, but her figure is that of Lavinie Millefleurs. Sir Chandos feels himself aggrieved by the presence of other people who have no business there, to wit, Colin Cathcart, Prometheus Hornblower, and Sim Blunt, but the advent of the girl who has proclaimed herself to be his wife is hardly to be borne.

He would give orders for her identification and removal, but for the restraining influence of Moses Sharp, who insists that it would be far better, if possible, not to precipitate a scene which would furnish a scandal for the whole shire to talk about.

So Chandos sits in his father's chair and gnaws his white lips with apprehensive impatience. He is not greatly interested in the contents of the will, which can only dispose of the few thousands the late baronet may have accumulated out of the surplus of income over expenditure, and cannot affect the entail which bestows upon him the title and the estate.

Not until an exclamation from his mother startles him, and he becomes conscious that all the faces in the room are turned towards them in wonder and curiosity, does he begin to feel concern respecting the meaning of involved legal phraseology which the grey-haired lawyer is reading with husky indistinctness.

But with the next few words he is roused to strained, breathless attention and horrible, petrifying fear. He has no thought now of Lavinie Millefleurs, no dread of what the people around him may think upon that subject or any other.

All the powers of his shallow mind are concentrated upon the realisation of the awful truth—that everything he possesses in the world, his very name even, is passing from him, and that nothing is being given in exchange except the reversion at his mother's death of the few thousands of accumulated savings, of which mention has been already made.

"Allow me to look at the will," says Mr. Sharp, briskly.

Chandos's distracted gaze follows his lawyer, as the eyes of any poor wretch upon trial for his life rest upon the face of the counsel for the defence. But Mr. Sharp, after minute examination of the parchment, shakes his head.

"I have here another document in Sir Marmaduke's own handwriting, which I was instructed by him to put in as a kind of supplement to his will," says Mr. Griffiths, dryly.

He is the only person in the room who appears quite unmoved by the drama in which he plays so important a part.

Then he proceeds in those husky, indistinct tones of his to read a statement which recites concisely and in their proper sequence the events concerning which it took Sir Colin so many months to gather imperfect information. To many of the listeners, notably so to the Rev. Felix Pole-Gell, every detail is marvellous; to us the paper would relate little we do not know, except that Sir Marmaduke and Colin's mother



met late one night near the shaft of the abandoned lead mine, and that in a struggle for possession of her marriage certificate she was thrown down it.

By accident, Sir Marmaduke avers, and who shall refused to believe him? The gift of the witch's cottage to Miss Wraxall, ere yet the popular imagination had endowed her with supernatural power, was the price of her taciturnity respecting his intimacy with her apprentice, and afterwards frequent subsidies enabled the witch to gratify her eccentric propensities, and purchased her silence respecting the bigamous character of the union with Chandos's mother and the mysterious disappearance of the baronet's first wife.

Chandos leans forward in his roomy chair, his face buried in his hands, and sheds unmanly tears.

Lady Knollys, more haughtily inflexible than ever, sits bolt upright, listening attentively until the end.

"Of course we shall take steps to protect our rights," she says, firmly. "As Sir Marmaduke's wife and widow, I protest—"

"Ecoutez! écoutez!" cries a shrill voice, with a peal of vindictive, taunting laughter. "Hark you to the woman for so many years la maîtresse of Sare Marmaduke. Her rights! Bah! I think we have wasted too many words on so ridiculous a liaison."

It is that suspicious, veiled mourner who speaks, rising from her seat, and tearing the veil aside. Truly, it is Lavinie Millefleurs. Has she forgotten, in her exultation at the trouble which has come upon those who wronged her, that as Chandos's wife she must needs be a participant?

"The sentiment—it is not mine," she continues, as if in answer to the indignant looks of her audience. "It is that of Sare Marmaduke's maîtresse, when I, wife of Chandos, her son, I demanded to take the place which to me it belongs."

"Put her out, somebody," growls Sir Blunt's deep bass.

But nobody seems inclined to execute the request.

"Ecoutez, and remember you, all the world," pursues the Frenchwoman, warming to her theme. "Of the babes there, the child who weeps, I am the wife, married with all the forms, but by the cunning of the villain mon mari, by a curé personated who was not a curé, but dressed as one and paid to represent. Nevertheless, the marriage, celebrated beyond the Scotch border, is by English law none can dispute. Chandos mon mari can marry never no more, but to be begameest as was Sare Marmaduke, his father."

"Now then," growls Mr. Blunt, rising, and advancing towards her, pointing the while to the door, "now then, mam'selle, you've said your say, now hook it—mizle. Adly—comprezny—sling your hook."

"I go," says the girl, majestically. "I go to la belle France, there to form, perhaps, a union more happy, for by French law I am not married, and the babe cannot claim me, for he has neglected to procure the consent of my father and of my mother, which was necessary. Think you I would myself have given to him, un lâche, un scélérat, un fat, un petit maître, un—"

"That'll do, that'll do," says Sir Blunt, seizing her by the arm and ejecting her, in an exit more hasty than dignified, from the room.

## CHAPTER XLV.

Strike! and strike hard!  
The most convincing argument to use  
Against evil deeds is the argument of blows.

The unceremonious ejection of Lavinie Millefleurs is the signal for a general break-up. The mourners who have listened to the reading of the will gather in knots, discussing its provisions, or tendering congratulations to Sir Colin.

Lady Knollys, taking her son's arm, leads him

away to her boudoir, responding with scanty civility to Colin's overtures for a friendly and pacific understanding.

She knows in her heart that it would be better and more prudent to yield gracefully to the stubborn logic of facts which have to-day been brought to light, but her proud heart, in its despairing bitterness, incites her to fight against Fate itself.

Meanwhile, Sir Blunt has gone to a stand in the hall, and has taken therefrom the largest hunting-crop it contains. He balances it between finger and thumb gleefully.

"I polished off the doctor with the mustard-plaster and the 'metic, and Death polished off the baronet without givin' me half a chance," he soliloquises. "There's only the lawyer left, and he'll get it hot directly. It'll cost me a f'pun note, but— Here, Yallershins?"

"Sir?" responds the meek footman, with as much indignation as he is capable of exhibiting.

"You go to Lawyer Sharp and tell him, werry civil and perlite, mind, that a gen'leman wants to speak with him in the garding outside. You won't know the gen'leman's name, except that he's one o' the friends o' the new barrowknight, and—here's half-a-crown, Yallershins, and another in my pocket for you arter my hintervoo wi' the lawyer."

Then Mr. Blunt draws the hunting-crop through his fingers caressingly, and, keeping it well out of sight, strolls carelessly amongst the geometrical flower-beds, until, seeing the solicitor in the doorway, he turns his back upon him sharply and grins one of those noiseless grins which stretch his slit of a mouth from ear to ear.

"That's the gentleman, sir," indicates the meek footman.

And the solicitor, his mind still full of the extraordinary revelations to which he has just listened, and which will so injuriously affect his own fortunes, descends the steps.

Not until he has approached within half a dozen yards does he recognise the figure of the gold-digger in its novel garb of black.

"I just wanted to ax ye, sir," says Sir Blunt, mildly, "to be so good as not to make a loonatic on me agin."

"My good man," replies the lawyer, smilingly, "with Sir Marmaduke's death the necessity for such expedients has passed away."

"Oh, that was an expedient, wasn't?" inquires the gold-digger, with one of his silent grins. "Then what d'ye call this?"

With the air of a human tiger about to spring he produces the concealed instrument of torture, and the lawyer's heart dies within him.

"What d'ye call this?" repeats his foe. "Ye don't know? Then I'll teach ye, ye durned scamp. This is Sir Blunt's expedient, and this is the use on it."

One bound, and he holds the little man by the collar in a grasp of iron. With a cruel hiss the hunting-crop descends, and the hiss is followed by a yell of pain.

There is no escape, no remedy; a child could not be more helpless in the grip of a giant. Scandalised people in their suits of black come out to ascertain the cause of the uproar, and would interfere to rescue the assailed, perhaps, but that Mr. Blunt's sunken eyes are gleaming like coals of fire, and he looks like a fiend incarnate.

Feeling that in this case discretion is by far the better part of valour, they forbear to meddle. Moreover, somebody knows all about the Sanitarium episode, and is recounting it for the spectators' benefit.

Not till Sir Blunt's arm aches with pain, and Moses Sharp's small body is one mass of wheals, does that well-deserved flagellation cease. Then the weary gold-digger flings his enemy from him with a stern warning for the future.

"Ye can have the law of me if ye like," he cries, "but you've got no more'n your deserts, and if so be as you take any notice whatsum-dever of the hidin' I've gin ye this day, I'll give ye hidin' number two with a stout oak cudgel, and break every bone in your durned body afore I've done. There!"

And Moses Sharp, as he creeps away, implicitly credits that threat, and inwardly resolves he will take no measures whatever to provoke its execution.

But little remains to be told about the personages who have figured in this history.

Sir Marmaduke is dead, peace to his manes! If he had lived perhaps Sir Blunt might have told the world two or three queer incidents of those days when Master Duke's uncle was still alive, and Master Duke, not content with a thousand follies, even descended one dark night to the crime of easing a tenant of the money he had drawn from bank to pay his rent.

Miss Wraxall is dead also. She bequeathed the witch's cottage and all the money therein, wrapped in filthy rags and stuffed away in all sorts of places, likely and unlikely, to Sir Colin, but charged the bequest with the maintenance, in aristocratic feline comfort and idleness, of the five black tabbies, her familiars.

Prometheus Hornblower has constructed the Braxton, Duffelpool, Hollowbridge, and Astonburne Direct Railway, and it is a marked success from every point of view save a pecuniary one.

He is now preparing estimates for such alterations in the rolling stock as will enable him to run the trains, not by steam, but by electricity.

Lavinie Millefleurs has not been seen or heard of since the reading of the will. It is supposed that she has returned to la belle France, and has carried out her announced intention of forming another matrimonial union.

Dr. and Mrs. Gwynne jog along in the quiet, homely way to which they have been accustomed. The doctor has no troubles, his wife has but two—increasing obesity, and the fact that people will play tennis instead of croquet.

Still she can always make up a four game with the assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Blunt, who live next door.

Mrs. Blunt is a very lady-like person, devotedly attached nevertheless to her rough diamond of a husband, with whom she fell violently and unaccountably in love whilst she was plotting his escape from the Sanitarium.

Lady Knollys and Chandos are living in the south of France, upon the interest of the money which will eventually revert to the latter under Sir Marmaduke's will.

Doctor Tom Evans is Doctor Tom Evans of Duffelpool no longer. He went to the dogs long ago, and is believed to earn a precarious livelihood by vending nostrums at fairs.

Pops, the pawnbroker, who personated a clergyman for Chandos Knollys's benefit, has filed his petition, owing to his having abandoned the business of a pawnbroker, which he understood, for that of a money-lender, which he did not, his advances being many of them of the nature of that to Chandos, of which he will never recover one penny.

The Rev. Felix Pole-Gell is still alive. Now that his daughter has a home of her own he would be a very lonely old man, but for his family tree.

He means to live as long as he can, for he is not quite certain that in Heaven, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, genealogies are so much respected as they are by right-thinking people on earth.

And May and Colin—I beg pardon—Sir Colin and Lady Knollys. Need I say that they are as happy as the day is long, and a precious deal happier?

Ask the Astonburne folks the next time you go into Loamshire. You may know the village, though Astonburne is not its real name, by the hill of easy gradient, the ivy-covered church with a wooden steeple, and by the marble font over which marble angels hover.

The people there will tell you that if ever the Dunmow fitch might truthfully have been claimed it is by the young baronet and his lady at The Hall.

[THE END.]



[AT HIS MERCY.]

## MARIANA: A FLORENTINE LEGEND.

A SHORT STORY.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

DURING the years which I spent in the lovely city of Florence, it was often my practice to pass the hot summer mornings in the cool chambers of the "Magliabechian Library," pondering

Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore.

One day, while turning over the leaves of a huge folio, I was surprised to find inserted between them a small MS. written in a strange, crabbed and almost illegible hand. My curiosity was aroused, and thinking that I had discovered some important but neglected document, the publication of which would secure me immortal fame, I determined to decipher it.

After a week's hard work I succeeded; but, much to my disappointment, instead of the important historical document I had hoped, I found only this tale:

About two hundred years ago, says the MS. (which, by the way, is without date, but appears to have been written towards the close of the six-

teenth century) party spirit ran high in Florence; for although the government was still republican in form, the nobles and wealthier merchants had gradually usurped the power, and excluding the people from all participation in the management of the affairs of the State, had by their unjust laws and acts of arbitrary violence driven them to that state of desperation where the slightest provocation would lead to an outbreak of popular fury.

Among the most beloved leaders of the populace and the moderate party of the nobles, was the young merchant Ugo Landini. More than once had he, with a few devoted friends, earned the hatred of the aristocratic faction by opposing their lawless violence.

Of late, this hatred—and especially that of their leader, Count Corso Varini Gonfaloniere, the chief magistrate of the city—had been increased by the fact that Ugo had won the affection and hand of Lady Mariana Visdomini, the only remaining representative of that powerful family.

Every means had been tried by the nobles and their leader to prevent this disgraceful marriage, as they considered it, but in vain. The lady remained firm in her choice, and gave little heed to either threats or entreaties. Determined to prevent the marriage at all hazards, the nobles held a secret council the day before the ceremony was to take place, at which it was resolved to proceed to violent measures, and full authority was given to Lord Varini, who had long been a

suitor for the lady's hand, to act as became his judgment.

"Send Baccio to me in the red room at once!" cried the Count Varini, as late that evening he entered his palace and mounted the stairs.

An instant later, a tall, ungainly man, with an expression half cunning, half fierce, stood before him.

"Baccio," said he, as the man saluted him, and stood motionless awaiting his orders, "you will take Manfredi and his troops and station yourself near the Strozzi palace. When the Lady Mariana Visdomini leaves the ball, seize her and bring her before me. Hasten or you will be too late. Go!"

With a low bow the man silently withdrew.

"So, Lady Mariana," mused the count, as he paced up and down the room, "you disdained my love! you prefer the young merchant, Ugo, to me, the Lord Varini! You will marry him to-morrow. We shall see! Do you think the most powerful lord in Florence will allow himself to be set aside for a plebeian merchant? No, by the Lord of Heaven! I shall soon have you in my power, and then—"

He paused, and sinking upon a chair was soon lost in deep thought.

An hour passed. The noiseless servant glided into the chamber, spread the table with a tempting supper, and lighted the Venetian crystal lamps, whose blaze was reflected by the arras which adorned the crimson tapestried walls; but still the count sat musing.

At length a noble stag-hound bounded into the room, and by his rude caresses awakened his master from his reverie. Glancing at a huge clock which stood near him, Count Corso started to his feet.

"Twelve o'clock!" exclaimed he. "Where is Baccio? Has not that scoundrel returned?"

"No, my lord," answered a servant, who stood respectfully by the table. "But your supper waits."

"Supper!" cried Corso, angrily. "Fool! I am— But glancing at the man, who stood stiff and motionless as a block of wood, he burst into a loud laugh, and, placing himself at the table, continued, in calmer tones, "You are right. Serve me, then go and inquire if Baccio has returned."

A few moments passed in silence, broken only by the ticking of the clock, when the door opened, and Baccio, his armour broken and bloody, his right arm hanging helpless at his side, entered and stood, half respectfully, half defiantly, before his master.

"You have succeeded?" exclaimed Corso, eagerly.

"No, my lord, I have failed!" answered the man, quietly.

"What! Have you dared to disobey my orders?" cried the count, fiercely, clutching his dagger as he sprang from his chair, and advancing threateningly toward his servant.

"Put up your dagger, my lord," said Baccio, coolly, accustomed to the outbreaks of his master's temper. "I am not to blame. I obeyed your orders. With Manfredi's troop I attacked the escort of the Lady Mariana, and should have succeeded in bringing her hither had it not been for the arrival of young Ugo and his compatriots."

"Ten thousand curses on the villain!" swore Corso, hotly. "But you! Did you fight? Did you kill the reptile, Baccio?"

"I tried my best, my lord, but I was lucky to escape with only this," answered Baccio, pointing to the dangling arm. "Young Ugo hits quick and heavily—it was a miracle that saved my head."

"Must I always be thwarted by that upstart?" exclaimed Corso, commencing to pace up and down the room, utterly unmindful of the wounded man, who waited his permission to withdraw.

"Can we not waylay him as he goes to-morrow to his marriage?" ventured Baccio, grimly.

"What?" growled Corso, savagely. "Create a riot in the day-time, and have the whole city aroused to—Ah! I have it!" cried he, exultingly, interrupting himself and pausing in front of Baccio. "He would marry the woman I love!"



By heaven! his wedding shall be a strange one! Baccio," continued he, approaching his silent servant, "dictate to me an accusation against Ugo for having attacked you in the public streets."

"But, my lord—" "Do as I bid you!" he continued, haughtily. "Am I not one of the council? I myself will give you the order for his arrest, and to-morrow he shall be in prison! Here—no words!" continued he, drawing a purse of gold from his pocket, as he saw the man still hesitated.

Baccio bowed low. In a few moments he left his master's presence with the warrant of arrest in his hand.

"Ha! ha! ha!" chuckled Corso, as he resumed his interrupted repast. "My young merchant, you would have a law making it treason to attack a person in the streets. Much good it will have done you to have rescued your bride! We shall see who weds the Lady Mariana!"

On the morning following the unsuccessful attempt of Lord Varini to carry off the Lady Mariana, the sun streaming brightly through the painted windows of the church of "Oquisanti," dyed with still brighter tints the gorgeous costumes of the throng of nobles and ladies who had assembled to witness the marriage of the young and popular Ugo Landini and the beauty of Florence, Lady Mariana Visdomini. The large square in front of the church was filled with a motley crowd of peasants, artisans and citizens, who were gathered together, partly from love of the bridegroom and a curiosity to see the wedding procession, and partly from the hope to profit by the "largess" which it was the custom for newly married people to distribute among the crowd.

The air resounded with the murmur of the expectant people, and many were the exclamations in commendation of the beauty and generosity of the bride, and execrations of the haughty nobles who had so bitterly opposed this marriage of a noble lady with a plebeian merchant.

"Did you hear, Carlo," said an old man, addressing his neighbour, who stood in the open door of the church, "that the Lady Mariana was attacked last night in the public streets?"

"Yes," answered the man addressed; "twas a plot to prevent the marriage by carrying off the bride; but it failed, thanks to the interference of the people. These nobles must be taught a lesson. Before long they will say no one shall marry but themselves."

"It was the troops of Count Varini that attacked her," said a third. "I suspect he would not object to marrying her himself; she has a queenly dowry."

"The villain!" exclaimed the man who had first spoken. "Let him beware! He cannot steal the wife of Ugo as he stole my poor daughter, for if he—"

The rest of the old man's sentence was drowned in the loud shouts which welcomed the appearance of the wedding procession.

The bridal party entered the church, the ceremony proceeded, and the words which were to make the noble lady the plebeian merchant's wife were being pronounced, when a loud shout was heard in the square, and a large body of armed men entered the church, preceded by the "Bargello," or chief constable of Florence. Marching up to the altar, he laid his hand on the bridegroom's arm, and proclaimed his arrest in the name of the council.

In an instant all was confusion. Lady Mariana, with a scream of terror, threw her arms about her lover's neck. A hundred swords flashed in the sunlight, and in another moment the temple of God would have been defiled with blood had not Ugo, disengaging himself from the arms of his bride, turned to the crowd, and in a voice that rang clear and loud commanded them to respect the temple of the Most High. Then, turning to the officer, who stood pale and trembling beside him, he said, in a stern voice:

"How dare you violate the sanctuary of Christ?"

"There is no sanctuary for those accused of treason," answered the officer, "and you are

accused of having without cause attacked the servants of Lord Varini in the public street."

An angry murmur from the crowd followed these words, and again the swords were raised threateningly; but a gesture from Ugo held them in abeyance.

"My friends," said he, proudly, "let there be no violence; the law must be obeyed. The council meet this afternoon, when it will be easy to prove the falsity of this accusation. Until then let the law take its course."

Then, turning to the Bargello, he said, quietly:

"I am your prisoner; but you will grant me ten minutes' liberty?"

"You have saved my life," replied the officer, glancing at the still threatening crowd. "I await your pleasure."

"Let the ceremony proceed," commanded Ugo, calmly, taking Mariana's hand and again kneeling before the altar.

The astonished priest obeyed and resumed the interrupted rites, pronouncing amidst armed men and flashing swords the peaceful benediction.

A few moments, and Ugo, whispering a word of consolation and courage to his weeping wife, tore himself from her trembling arms, and followed by the crowd of murmuring spectators, marched away to the common prison, there to wait the meeting of the council.

Lady Mariana, secure in the innocence of her husband, returned to her palace. Scarcely had she laid aside her bridal robes before a servant entered her apartment and presented her a note in the hand-writing of Ugo. Hurriedly opening it, she read as follows:—

"MY DARLING MARIANA.—It will be necessary for you to testify in my behalf before the council. Do not fear, but follow the messenger who brings this note; he will conduct you to the council chamber. Ugo."

Without hesitating she arose, descended the stairs, and entered the sedan chair that awaited her in the court, surrounded by the usual escort of a lady of rank of that period.

They had not proceeded far, and were passing the Palace Varini, when suddenly they were attacked by a band of men-at-arms. The escort, after a desperate resistance, was overpowered, the lady seized and conveyed into the palace, where in the red room Count Corso sat, impatiently waiting his victim.

"What means this violence, my lord?" demanded the lady, as she was borne into his presence.

With a wave of his hand Varini dismissed the men-at-arms; then, turning to the lady, with a smile of triumph he said:

"It means that I could not see you sacrifice yourself by becoming the wife of a base-born merchant like Ugo—you who are worthy to adorn the palace of the highest lord in Florence. It means," continued he, sinking on one knee before the beautiful woman, who stood haughtily before him, "that I love you, sweet Mariana! It is for love of you that I have had your plebeian lover arrested—that I forged the letter you received this morning. Tell me, Mariana, is not such love—"

"What!" exclaimed Mariana, angrily interrupting him. "You forged that letter?"

"Yes; but my love is my excuse," replied Corso, passionately, "and such love as mine alone is worthy of you, Mariana!"

"Arise, my lord," said the lady, pale with anger. "How dare you thus insult me?"

"Insult you!" cried Corso, grasping her hand and attempting to kiss it. "Is it an insult to ask you to become my wife?"

"Let me go, my lord!" said Mariana, withdrawing her hand forcibly from his grasp and retreating a step or two with a gesture of proud contempt. "I already am the wife of Ugo Landini."

"Already his wife?" cried Corso, springing to his feet.

"Yes," replied the lady, slowly and proudly. "And you will do well to remember it."

"What do you mean?" said Varini, hoarsely.

"Was not he arrested this morning?"

"He was," said Mariana, "but not until after the ceremony was performed."

"Ten thousand curses on that traitor, Baccio!" cried the count, furiously. "His life shall pay for this! Fool that I was to trust that cowardly villain!" he fiercely continued, striding up and down the chamber. "Why did I not go myself, to make the arrest sure? By heavens, you shall marry me!" he cried, suddenly interrupting himself and stopping before the astonished lady. "I will have your husband hanged as a traitor, and then you will be free."

"My husband is no traitor," said Mariana, proudly, "and neither you nor the council will dare touch one hair of his head."

"Not dare! Who says dare to me?" said Corso, driven to desperation by the coolness of the lady. "I swear he shall hang before the sun sets!"

"Do not rely too much upon your power, Lord Corso," said Lady Mariana, contemptuously. "Ere this, how often has my brave husband withstood you and your minions!"

The bold words and indifferent attitude of the lady, accompanied with such an expression of proud contempt as rested upon her fair features, drove the enraged man to the verge of madness; the veins rose in thick cords on his brow, and flecks of foam rested on his white lips. Grasping his dagger he rushed toward her, beside himself with rage.

Lady Mariana neither moved nor winced. All the fine, brave blood of her ancestors throbbed in her veins at this crowning indignity.

"Strike!" said she, with a smile of dauntless courage. "To murder a defenceless woman would be an act worthy the noble Lord of Varini."

The nobleman stopped suddenly, and by a mighty effort controlled his rage. Throwing the dagger from him, he burst into a hoarse laugh.

"Murder you, beautiful Mariana? That will I not! You shall have a better fate! Though your husband may escape hanging," he continued, after a moment of deep thought, "you, my lovely lady, are in my power; and from hence you shall never go, my wife or not, as you please."

As he approached once more, Mariana, who, while he had been speaking, had quietly possessed herself of the discarded dagger, confronted him with uplifted arm.

"Back, villain!" she cried. "Another step, and I plunge this into your base heart!"

"Ha! ha! Heroics!" exclaimed Corso, pausing and gazing admiringly on the beautiful woman before him.

Then, with a snake-like, hardly perceptible movement, approaching nearer and nearer the lady, who had turned the dagger and stood with its point pressed against her beating heart, he continued, with a sneer:

"I love to see you thus, Mariana; you are even more beautiful so. But do you think—"

Suddenly springing forward and grasping her arm, he wrenched the dagger from her grasp and flung it to the extreme end of the room, crying exultingly, as he clasped her in his arms:

"You are mine! Mariana—Satan himself could not save you now!"

Suddenly the door of the room was flung open, and Baccio hastily entered.

"What do you want?" shouted Corso, furiously, still holding the struggling woman in his arms.

"My lord, you are summoned to the council immediately," answered Baccio.

"I will not go!" angrily answered Corso.

"My lord, the council pray you to come at once," said Baccio. "The people are irritated at the arrest of this morning, and the presence of yourself and your troops can alone control them."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Lady Mariana.

"Arm my people. I will go at once," said Corso, after a moment's hesitation. Then, turning to the lady, he said, sullenly, "Do not hope too much; you shall not escape me, though ten thousand people should revolt." And dragging her across the room, he pushed her roughly into

a cabinet which was concealed beneath the hangings of the wall.

Carefully closing the door, he muttered, as he fastened the complicated lock:

"I am certain of my revenge, even should that villain Ugo escape."

A moment later he joined his troops and hastened toward the palace.

In the meantime the friends of Ugo had been busy among the people, and by the time the council had assembled the square in front of the city palace was filled with armed peasants and citizens, who clamorously demanded the release of their favourite leader, Ugo.

The council, not knowing what course to pursue, unwilling to yield their enemy his liberty, and yet fearing the rage of the populace, had resorted to the expedient of temporizing with the people, promising them that Ugo should be set free at once, but at the same time secretly sending for Lord Varini and his troops.

On his appearance with his armed retainers in the square, the people, at once understanding the double dealing of the council, and exasperated at their treachery, attacked and overpowered him, killing most of his men-at-arms and taking him prisoner.

Marching into the palace, they liberated Ugo, and by universal acclamation declared the council dissolved, and proceeded to elect a government of their own whose first act should be to condemn the members of the former council to death.

In those days Justice was swift in executing her decrees. A gibbet was soon erected, and one by one the council was led out and executed, amidst the fierce shouts of the people.

Pale and trembling Lord Varini stood beneath the fatal gibbet, the noose already around his neck, when Ugo, who, on being liberated, had flown to the Palace Visdomini and there learned the story of the letter and capture of the Lady Mariana by the Count Corso, rushed into the square, and dashing aside the executioners seized the count by the arm, crying:

"Where is Mariana?"

"She is safe, Ugo," said the count, his eyes brightening as he saw a chance of escaping his doom. "Save my life from these monsters, and I will deliver her safely to you."

"Villain! where is she?" cried Ugo, impatiently. "Where have you concealed her?"

"Promise me my life, and I will tell you," replied Corso.

"Your life! No, you shall die, miserable villain!" cried Ugo, fiercely.

"Then your wife will die also," answered Corso, "but she will die inch by inch of starvation! For you will never find her without my aid."

While this strange dialogue had been going on the people had recovered from their astonishment at the interruption, and with loud murmurs demanded that the execution should proceed. But Ugo in a few words explained to them the cause of his behaviour, and the changeable crowd, with a shout of "Long live Lady Mariana!" granted his request that the count's life should be spared, but only on condition that he should lead them to the place where Lady Mariana was concealed and then leave Florence for ever.

At this sentence the count turned deadly pale, but instantly recovering himself, and muttering "At least I shall be revenged," he led the way toward his palace, followed by Ugo and the crowd.

Entering the red room, he took from his bosom a key of peculiar workmanship, and, giving it to Ugo, directed him to raise the hangings which concealed the cabinet in which Mariana was imprisoned.

Ugo seized the key and applied it to the lock. Suddenly a loud report startled the anxious crowd, and with a groan Ugo sank forward into the arms of Mariana.

At the same moment Varini turned and rushed through the terror-stricken crowd; but before he reached the door he fell, pierced by a hundred daggers.

Fortunately the deadly machine which Varini had prepared with such infernal foresight had

not acted as thoroughly as he had hoped, for, although dangerously wounded, Ugo, thanks to the tender nursing of his wife, recovered, and was for years the most trusted and beloved officer of the Florentine Republic.

## FACETIÆ.

**A PROPOS DU TEMPS.**—An unusually hot knight,—Sir Donald Currie. Punch.

**GENIAL HOST** (meaning to plead for poor Jenkins, who has complained that he can't find a partner): "Let me introduce Mr. Jenkins to you, Miss Jones. I'm sure your card can't be full!" Punch.

**A SUBTLE DISTINCTION.**

**JONES** (who is of an inquiring mind): "Ain't you getting tired of hearing people say, 'That is the beautiful Miss Belsize?'"

**MISS BELSIZE** (a professional beauty): "Oh, no. I'm getting tired of hearing people say, 'Is THAT the beautiful Miss Belsize?'" Punch.

**SEASONABLE ENJOYMENT.**—Ocean cum dignitate. Punch.

**"THE SERVANTS!"**

**FOOTMAN OUT OF LIVERY** (to coachman): "Well, Smithers, how are you getting on? You're off soon, I suppose?"

**COACHMAN**: "Well, no; I'm a-goin' to send our people 'abroad' at the end o' the month, and then we shall have the 'ouse to ourselves, and—we shall see somthink of yer perhaps?"

[Her ladyship making her appearance—Tacet!] Punch.

**MILK ABOVE AND MILK BELOW.**

**THE Aylesbury Company** began business as milk-dealers, and now they advertise that, as manufacturers, they are prepared to supply a very nutritious imitation of human milk. Perhaps, before long, they will supply the milk of human kindness. Punch.

**MAMMA**: "What was the name of the first man, dear?"

**DEAR**: "Adam."

**MAMMA**: "And what was his wife's name?"

**DEAR**: "Madam!" Moonshine.

**GIFTS FOR LUNATICS.**—Presents of mind. Moonshine.

**GENTLEMEN-IN-WAITING.**—Holders of Turkish Bonds. Moonshine.

**A BOX OF ELECTRICITY.**—A stroke of lightning. Moonshine.

**AIRY NOTION.**—Raising the wind. Moonshine.

**A FACT.**

**BAKER** (to youthful customer, who has just purchased a new loaf): "I say, this is not enough. Bread's rose."

**Y. C.**: "Oh, has it? When did it rise?"

**BAKER**: "To-day."

**Y. C.**: "Oh, then I'll have yesterday's one, please!" Moonshine.

**A DEAD SET.**—Mummies. Moonshine.

**SIN-TAX.**—The police rate. Moonshine.

**SEASONABLE FRUIT FOR CRICKETERS.**—"Sloes." Moonshine.

**THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR.**—Conscience. Moonshine.

"Don't run me down," said the boot to its wearer. Moonshine.

"How you made me start!" said the bubble scheme, in a frightened tone, to its promoters. Moonshine.

**AN "X-PENCE-IVE" ARTICLE.**—Any one that cost ten pennies. Fun.

**THE BANEFUL EFFECTS OF DRINK.**

**O'MULLIGAN**: "It's drink, sorr, 's the curse of ould Oireland. Drink!—that makes a man

bate his wife, starve his children, go out to shoot his landlord—and miss him too, bedad!" Fun.

It is found in the course of the year that though numbers of thieves are chased, very few are virtuous. Fun.

**SHOOTING LIKE A BIRD.**—Making a "Magpie" with a bullet. Fun.

**A YOUNG GRAMMAR-CRAMMER.**

A FOND mother, speaking to us the other day of her prodigy of a son, declared that he positively devoured his lesson books. "Ah!" was our response, "then no doubt he has digested his 'Eaten' Latin Grammar long ago?" The fond mother failed, however, to understand or appreciate our "chew d'esprit." Fun.

**A FORCE-ABLE SUGGESTION.**

**POLICEMEN** are popularly supposed to be arrayed in a shade of invisible green, but why the uniform of the so-called "copper" should not be of an unmistakable copper colour is what we want to know. Unless, indeed, it be thought inadvisable to make them more like orange-"peelers." Fun.

**POPULAR SAYINGS PLAYFULLY PUT.**

"HEEF's towards you," as the navy remarked when he flung the brickbat.

"While there's life there's rope," as Mr. Marwood playfully put it.

"That is a matter of a-pinion," as the gentleman about to be operated upon rejoined.

"'Twere folly to be wise," as the man said when they took him off to Bedlam.

"A bumper at parting," as the bibulous party observed when he came into collision with the lamp-post.

"What's the odds so long as you're rappy?" as the medium playfully put it to the unseen spirit.

"Tub-he or not tub-he?" as our undecided gentleman was overheard to murmur a propos of his cold bath. Judy.

**DOMESTIC ADVICE.**

WHEN you detected your cook in the very act of stealing your coals, what would be the proper course to pursue towards her?—Well, if you must have it, to give her the sack, and tell her to scuttle. Judy.

**VERY TRUE.**

THERE are, it is too well known, innumerable bad characters who enlist as soldiers, but, when one comes to think of it, this is not so much to be wondered at, because, don't you see, every branch of an army must have its (s)camp. Judy.

**CHAFFISHNESS.**

**YOUNG BIRD**: "I thay, you know, Mither Marygold, you know, none of those theeds I bought of you and that a month ago have come up yet, you know!"

**OLD BIRD**: "Well, I didn't know till you told me; but I suspect you must have set 'em the wrong end up'ards." Judy.

**VOICE!**

It is said that Millais will do a portrait of Sims Reeves. He has done so many "speaking likenesses" that he is now ambitious of attempting a singing one. Funny Folks.

**NICE HOT WEATHER RESORT.**—"Summer's Town." Funny Folks.

**INGENIOUSLY PUT.**

(If it be true that women are best controlled through their vanity.)

**CHAPERON**: "Hush, dears! Don't chatter so! The heat spoils your complexions; but you need not let it freckle your tongues. Funny Folks.

**MAGICAL METAMORPHOSES.**

WONDROUS are the effects of thirst! We have frequently seen a "thirsty soul" walking along the road, and all in a minute he has turned into a public-house! Funny Folks.

**SONG FOR THE THERMOMETER** (to be sung in the shade).—"I'm Ninety-five." Funny Folks.



## GEMS OF THOUGHT.

SPEAKING without thinking is shooting without taking aim.

WISDOM is the olive branch that springeth from the heart, bloometh on the tongue, and beareth fruit in the actions.

A SMILE may be bright while the heart is sad; the rainbow is beautiful in the air, while beneath is the moaning of the sea.

No man, whether rich or poor, can make or retain a good and useful position in life without the two valuable habits of punctuality and temperance.

It is a very easy thing for a man to be wise for other people.

He who wishes to comprehend the present and understand the future must take his lesson from the past, for it is there that he finds the roots of the present and the germs of the future.

FLATTERY is a compound of falsehood, selfishness, servility and ill-manners. Any one of these qualities is enough to make a character thoroughly odious. Who then would be the person, or have any concern with him, whose mind is deformed by four such vices?

## STATISTICS.

In the second week of July there were 85,127 paupers in the metropolis, 47,535 of whom were indoor and 37,592 outdoor. This shows an increase of 2,133, 4,714, and 8,626 over the corresponding period in 1880, 1879, and 1878 respectively.

THE FRENCH AND GERMAN ARMIES.—The "Correspondence Française" gives the following comparative census of the French and German armies. Infantry.—Germany: 503 battalions of 600 men; total, 301,800. France: 641 battalions of 400 men; total, 256,400. Cavalry.—Germany: 405 squadrons of 180 men; total, 83,700. France: 392 squadrons of 170 men; total, 66,640. Artillery.—Germany: 2,935 pieces. France: 2,508 pieces. Engineers.—Germany: 19 battalions. France: 19 battalions. The German Imperial Guard consists of 29 battalions of infantry, in all 12,400 men; 18 squadrons of cavalry, in all 3,240 men; and 96 pieces of artillery, forming 16 batteries. Germany has thus 83,000 soldiers, and 623 pieces of cannon more than France.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

Cut a pineapple in thin slices; sprinkle it with sugar, and pour over it two or three glasses of red or white wine. Place it on the ice, and serve cold. It is a delicious dish at this season.

BLACKBERRY PUDDING.—Three pints of milk, five well-beaten eggs, three pints of blackberries, which have been previously stewed, with a little sugar, flour, salt, and two teaspoonfuls of yeast-powder. The batter should be stiff enough to drop from the spoon. The pudding is nice, either boiled or baked, and may be eaten with wine sauce flavoured with nutmeg.

RAW CUCUMBERS.—Pare and lay them in ice water one hour; then slice, and season to taste with vinegar, pepper, and salt. Never omit the soaking in ice water.

SWEET PICKLES.—There are many receipts for making a sweet pickle of fruit, all of which are complicated and tedious. The following, which will answer equally for damsons, plums, cherries, apricots, and peaches, serves every purpose of a fine-flavoured, handsome pickle, of good-keeping qualities, and has the advantage of giving but little trouble: Prepare your fruit as if for preserving, stoning it, and to seven pounds of fruit take three and one-half pounds

clean brown sugar, one pint vinegar, and one ounce each of cinnamon in sticks, sprig mace, and cloves. Put fruit into a jar, boil the vinegar and spices together, and pour it over the fruit, letting it stand for two days. Then pour the vinegar off again, put it on to boil, and when hot pour in the fruit and boil all together until they are clear and transparent. This does just as well as the repeated scalding usually recommended.

## COME OUT IN THE MOONLIGHT.

Oh, Mollie, come out in the moonlight,

Away from the gaslight and glare;

Let us listen to nature's own music,

And gaze on her beauties so fair.

My boat is awaiting our coming

The lake's quiet bosom afloat;

Let us drift them far out in the moon-

light,

And charter the fairies our boat.

And you shall be queen among fairies,

While I at your royal command

Will gather the fair water lilies,

Those sweet floating isles of our

land,

To crown you, my beauteous darling,

Liege queen of my life and my

heart;

Your domain, the lake's tideless bosom,

Reflects the sweet spell of your art.

My fingers shall sweep the harp

lightly,

While melody fills all the air,

Till angels their voices shall mingle,

And song seem the voice of a prayer;

Our souls shall so blend and awaken,

'Neath the spell of the moonlight and

love,

That Heaven shall open its portals,

Revealing the beauties above.

The moon 'neath the shadowy green-

wood

Will slow hide her beautiful face,

And homeward 'mid darkening

shadows

We'll slowly our pathway retrace,

And take up the tiresome routine

Of living as strangers again,

Yet long in our hearts there shall

linger

A beautiful, saddened refrain.

And oft in our dreams we'll be floating

Afar 'mid the lilies and love,

And the music and moonlight will

linger

Like perfume of flowers from above;

So, Mollie, come out in the moonlight,

And revel in beauty and song;

It will gladden your life for the mor-

row,

'Twill make you more hopeful and

strong.

E. A. H. B.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

MAJOR WINGFIELD, the introducer of lawn tennis, has been presented with a testimonial, which took the form of a handsome gold watch, with a pair of embossed raised platinum bats, beautifully executed by Messrs. Philips Brothers, of Cockspur Street, together with an elaborate platinum and gold chain, and a purse of 200 guineas.

Those who maintain that great profit is made by carrying goods to this country and that this will somewhat lighten the desperate balance against England, may, perhaps, be less boastful on that point when they learn that we are now carrying corn from New York to Liverpool as ballast in

some of our ocean steamers at as low as four shillings per ton.

It is stated that property of the value of £90,000,000 per annum is lost yearly on the rocks and sands of the British Islands, and that many more years will not be permitted to pass without the uses of mechanical science being turned to the recovery of some portion of this immense treasure.

HER MAJESTY will review the Scotch Volunteers at Holyrood on the 25th August. This date has been officially communicated.

A suggestion of a practical character was made as to the manner of decorating the streets on the Prince of Wales's visit to Derby. It was for the employment of coloured flannel for the festoons from window to window. Then, when all was over, to send the flannels to the Lady Superintendent at the Nurses' Home to rejoice the hearts of the sick poor. The idea may be borne in mind elsewhere.

THE latest American discovery is a new hat for ladies. It is called the "obelisk." Apparently if the portrait of this hat is at all like the original, the streets of the American cities must presently appear full of Macbethian witches, for the obelisk, it seems, is exactly like the weird and sinister headgear worn by those crones who sing evil songs upon the blasted heath. It may be characterised as a peaked sugar loaf. The height varies. Sometimes it reaches no higher than six inches. But this appears the minimum. It is hardly a hat to encourage. It might suit an organ-grinder.

TENS of thousands of Japanese fans must have been sold in the streets of London during the last few days. It is quite impossible to import these articles from Japan and sell them at a penny each with profit. Some speculator has probably bought up, at a cheap rate, stock which had been laid on one side as unsaleable. Placing them on the market at an opportune moment, he must have cleared a handsome sum by the transaction.

It is stated, "on undoubted authority," that the Pope has so strong a presentiment of his approaching death that he has made his will, as well as two pontifical testaments, one of which is believed to be of political importance.

THE death of Lord Hatherley leaves Lord Cairns the only ex-Lord Chancellor in receipt of a pension, a state of things which is almost unprecedented in recent times, and which presents a remarkable contrast to the condition of the House of Lords in the year 1873, when no fewer than five such pensions were payable.

AMONG the companies announced during the week is "The Constitutional Press Corporation," limited, with a capital of £50,000 in £1 shares. If £15,000 are subscribed a Conservative evening daily paper at one halfpenny will be started. Lord Rossmore is the chairman of the directors.

GREAT pressure is being brought to bear on the Marquis of Lorne, it is said, to induce him to stay for some time longer in Canada. The Duke of Argyll, however, wishes, so it is whispered, his son to return to this country.

THERE is a probability that the Queen will make a Royal progress round, or nearly round these islands by sea. It is almost certain that Her Majesty will go by water to Edinburgh to review the Scottish Volunteers, and there are hopes that she may be persuaded to extend her voyage.

NEW experiments with wood pavements in the streets of Paris are soon to be made.

THE father of the late Lord Chancellor Hatherley began life when a boy of eleven as one of the small hands in the factory of his father, the serge manufacturer of Tiverton, in Devonshire. Apprenticed at fourteen to a chemist and druggist of Exeter, named Newton, he was engaged for a while as the end of his seven years' probation as a traveller in the drug trade. Coming up to London he there established himself, first of all as a chemist and then as a hop merchant. Acquiring a considerable fortune he rose to be successively Alderman, Sheriff, and Lord Mayor of London. Twice, indeed, he occupied the civic chair as Chief Magistrate.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS should in all cases furnish us with their names and addresses. Letters signed simply with initials or a nom de plume may not always receive immediate attention, as our space is limited. No charge is made under any circumstances for advertisements appearing on this page.

T. M.—To make cotton duck for awnings mildew-proof: Saturate the cloth in a hot solution of soap (a quarter of a pound to the gallon of water); wring out and digest it for twelve hours or more in a solution of half a pound alum to the gallon of water.

M. W.—The frozen soil of the Siberian coast never thaws to a depth of more than two feet even during the greatest heat of the summer.

G. W. B.—How to convert rancid butter into a sweet, pure article fit for table use: One hundred pounds of the butter are mixed with about thirty gallons of hot water containing half a pound of bicarbonate of soda and fifteen pounds of fine granular animal charcoal, free from dust, and the mixture is churned together for half an hour or so. The butter is then separated; after standing, warmed and strained through a linen cloth, then re-salted, coloured, and worked up with about half its weight of fresh butter.

T. C.—The number of rainy days is greatest near the sea, and decreases in proportion the farther we penetrate into the interior.

W. F. C.—Coal became staple fuel in the time of William III. The prejudice against it was strong as well as unaccountable, and in 1806 the Commons petitioned the Crown to prohibit burning the "noxious article."

J. G.—You can procure a preparation of yellow dock root at any druggist's. It is generally combined with sarsaparilla. We know of nothing better for purifying the blood.

M. L.—Chalk in its prepared state is good for the teeth.

A. B. H.—It was once believed that putting a cold iron bar on top of beer barrels would prevent the contents from being soured by thunder. The custom is common in Kent and Hertfordshire.

G. N. E.—According to some antiquarians, the word "Humbag" comes from a worthless coinage used in Ireland in the time of William III., which was called "oom bag"—soft copper—worthless money.

E. B.—Gold is one of the sixty-four substances called elementary substances or chemical elements, because as yet they have not been decomposed, or resolved into simpler forms of matter. Chemical analysis determines only the relative proportions of each element which a compound may contain, the elements themselves, as above stated, being undecomposable.

R. C.—If the English language were divided into 100 parts, 60 would be Saxon, 30 would be Latin (including, of course, the Latin that has come to us through the French), and five parts would be Greek.

C. S.—Over 3,000 victims were executed for witchcraft during the reign of the Long Parliament. Barrington gives the whole number of those put to death in England on this charge as not less than 30,000.

E. H.—Flaxseed water is commonly used to keep the curl in false hair from being affected by perspiration or weather.

W. R.—To remove the wrinkles from the parchment without injury to the writing or printing thereon place the paper face downward upon a clean piece of blotting paper. Beat up to a clear froth, with a few drops of clove oil, the whites of several fresh eggs, and with the fingers spread this over the back of the sheet and rub it in until the parchment becomes uniformly soft and yielding. Then spread it out as smoothly as possible, cover it with a piece of oiled silk; put on it a piece of smooth board, and set it aside in a cool place, with a weight on the board, for twenty-four hours. Then remove the board and silk, cover with a piece of clean fine linen cloth, and press with a hot smoothing iron (not too hot) until all signs of wrinkles have disappeared. The heat renders the albumen insoluble and not liable to change.

LILY and ROSE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Lily is twenty-one, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Rose is nineteen, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of home. Respondents must be tall, of a loving disposition, fond of home.

LUCK and BEATIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Lucy is nineteen, medium height, fair, fond of music. Beatie is eighteen, medium height, dark, fond of home and music. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-five.

A. G., twenty-six, medium height, fair, would like to correspond with a good-looking young lady about twenty-three.

PRETTY PEGGIE, nineteen, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman between twenty and twenty-five with a view to matrimony.

MABEL, DAISY, JULIA, and ROSE, four friends, would like to correspond with four young gentlemen. Mabel is fair, of a loving disposition. Daisy is twenty-four, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition. Julia is twenty-two, medium height, dark, fond of singing and dancing. Rose is twenty-two, medium height, dark, good-looking.

A. C. S., M. H. N., M. S. D., and E. A. H., four friends, would like to correspond with four young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. A. C. S. is twenty, tall, dark, fond of home and music. M. H. N. is eighteen, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of dancing. M. S. D. is nineteen, tall, fair, fond of music and dancing. R. A. H. is twenty-three, tall, dark.

## THE BRIDE'S SONG.

JINGLE, jingle, merry bells,  
For to-morrow's my wedding day;  
Was ever a maid so happy as I?  
Was ever a maid so gay?

My true love is brave,  
My true love is fair—  
He comes from a distant town;  
He will bring me a wreath  
Of flowers so sweet  
To circle my tresses brown.

We shall live by the side  
Of a beautiful stream  
In the forest far away;  
And whatever I do,  
And whatever I say,  
Shall be done in my true love's way.

Our children shall ride  
By his side in the chaise,  
And make the merry woods ring;  
While I will listen  
To hear their return  
When the fruits of the hunt they bring.

My true love will cherish me  
When I am grown old,  
When my locks have turned to grey,  
For I will give him  
The love of my life—  
What more could he wish, I pray?

So jingle, jingle, merry bells,  
For to-morrow's my wedding day;  
Was ever a maid so happy as I?  
Was ever a maid so gay?

W. T.

A. W., E. S. and M. H., three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. A. W. is twenty, medium height, fair. E. S. is nineteen, medium height, brown hair, grey eyes. M. H. is eighteen, dark hair and eyes. Respondents must be good-looking.

ALICE, nineteen, tall, dark, good-looking, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen or eighteen, tall, good-looking.

ALICE and MARGARET, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Alice is twenty-three, tall, fair, good-looking. Margaret is medium height, fair, good-looking. Respondents must be tall, good-looking.

VIOLET and DAISY, two sisters, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Violet is twenty, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, good-looking, fond of home and children. Daisy is eighteen, medium height, fair hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of music and dancing. Respondents must be under thirty, tall, dark, good-looking.

A WIDOWER, twenty-nine, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

JESSIE, golden hair, brown eyes, would like to correspond with a dark young gentleman about nineteen.

LOTTIE, CARRIE and LYDIA, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Lottie is nineteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Carrie is eighteen, tall, dark, fond of home and music. Lydia is seventeen, medium height, fair, fond of home.

ROSAMOND M., twenty-eight, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young gentleman between twenty-eight and thirty with a view to matrimony.

EMILY and LIZZIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Emily is tall, fair. Lizzie is medium height, fair, fond of music.

LILY, eighteen, tall, fair, brown hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman. Respondent must be between twenty-four and thirty.

LIVELY JOE, nineteen, tall, fair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a good-looking young lady about seventeen or eighteen.

SWEET BEAR, seventeen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a tall, good-looking young gentleman.

BELLA and EVA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen about twenty-one. Bella is nineteen, tall, dark, fond of music and dancing. Eva is eighteen, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of music and singing.

WALTER, nineteen, medium height, fair, would like to correspond with a dark young lady about seventeen.

MARY and ADA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Mary is twenty, tall, dark, of a loving disposition. Ada is seventeen, medium height, fair, auburn hair, blue eyes. Respondents must be between seventeen and twenty-two.

FIFTH ROYAL LANCERS, nineteen, tall, fair, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be fair, fond of dancing.

ALICE, ANNIE and LIZZIE, three friends, would like to correspond with three tradesmen with a view to matrimony. Alice is twenty-three, tall, fair, of a loving disposition. Annie is twenty-two, tall, dark, fond of dancing. Lizzie is twenty-one, medium height, fair, fond of home and children.

H. P., a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty, tall, dark, good-looking, fond of home and dancing, would like to correspond with a dark young lady about nineteen with a view to matrimony.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

BESSY is responded to by—Henry, medium height, good-looking, of a loving disposition.

LILY by—J. T., twenty-five.

PEGGIE by—Henry H., twenty-three, medium height, dark.

TORST by—George, twenty-six, medium height, dark, fond of home.

E. J. L. by—Madge, twenty, medium height, good-looking.

VIOLET by—M. K., twenty-five, tall, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music.

DAISY by—Arthur, twenty-one, medium height, dark, fond of home and children.

ARTHUR by—Mabel, eighteen, tall, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music.

LIONEL by—A. B., eighteen, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music.

HARRY by—D. R., twenty-two, tall, dark, good-looking, fond of home and children.

JAMES by—Lily, twenty-one, tall, fair, of a loving disposition.

CHARLEY by—Polly, twenty-two, dark, good-looking, fond of home and children.

HENRY by—Jim, twenty-three, tall, fair, good-looking.

LOUIS by—May, eighteen, medium height, dark, fond of children.

ROMANTIC BILL by—Rose, twenty, tall, dark, good-looking.

CLARISSA by—Theodore, twenty-four, tall, fair, of a loving disposition.

MABEL by—Francis, twenty-four, tall, dark, fond of home and children.

GERTIE by—Harry, twenty-four, tall, dark, good-looking, fond of home and music.

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